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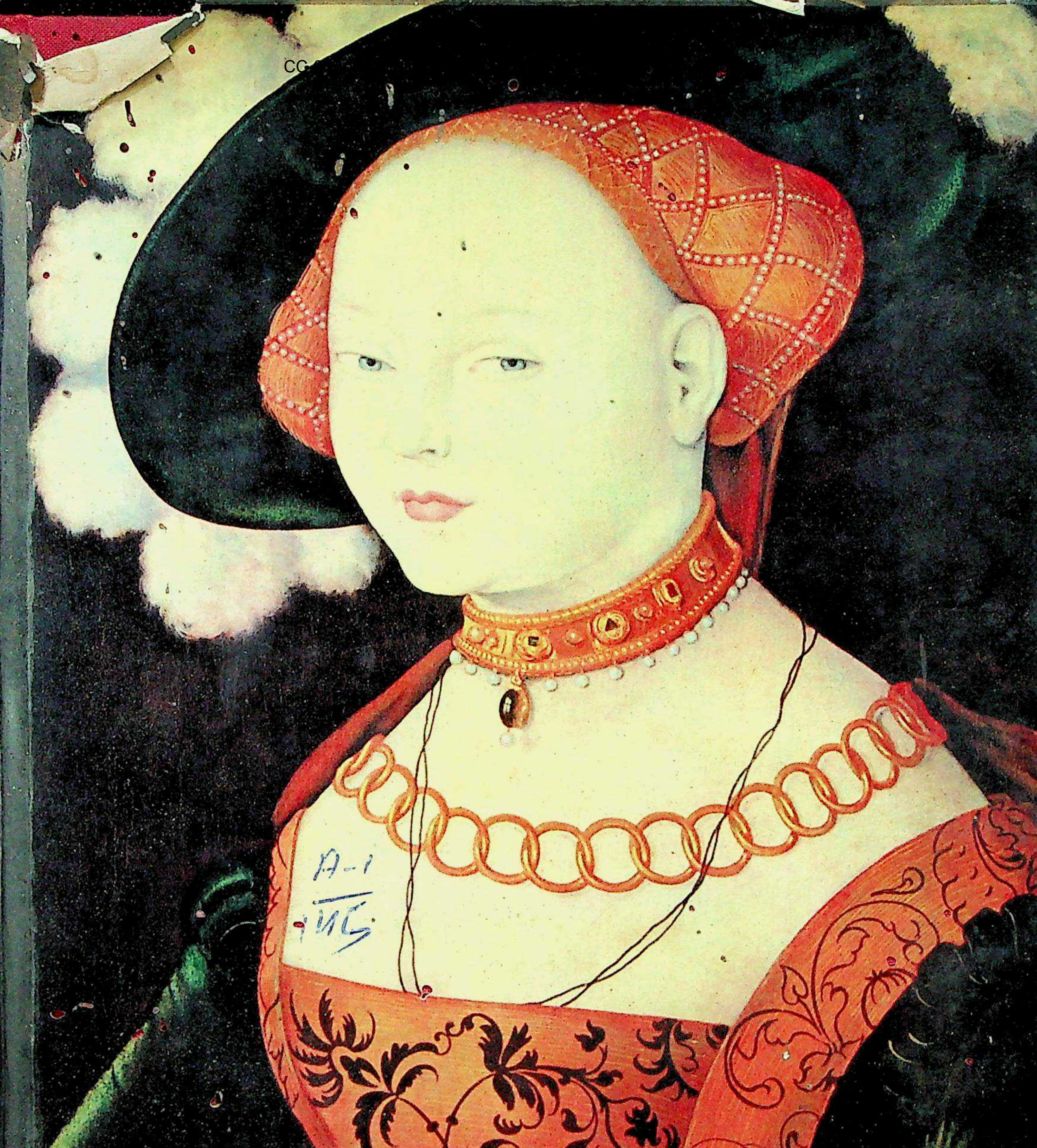

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FROM THE 14th TO THE 16th CENTURIES

BY PIERRE DESCARGUES

with 48 colour plates

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INTRODUCTION

THE CHARMS OF VENUS kept Tannhäuser prisoner for a year before he finally succeeded in freeing himself. No sooner had he left the enchanted mountain than he set out for Rome, eager to ask the Pope to hear his confession, eager to do penance for his pagan sojourn. But Urban IV sent him away saying: "As surely as the stick in my hand cannot grow leaves, your sins cannot be pardoned." So Tannhäuser departed with despair in his heart. But God works in a mysterious way. Three days after the poet's departure, the Pope saw that the stick was covered with foliage. Overcome with astonishment, he at once sent messengers to every country in the world to seek out Tannhäuser. But alas, it was too late! The pilgrim whom he had dismissed had returned to the Venusberg saying: "Since God sends me there, I shall return to the side of my gentle lady."

This 13th-century *chanson* by an anonymous poet is the key to mediaeval Germany. It reminds us that Christianity was still very precariously superimposed upon the old Germanic foundation—in this mountain Venus and her charms, students of mythology will easily recognise the ancient goddess Hulda and her magic caverns. The *chanson* also demonstrates how ready the German always is to restore the bulwarks of ancient beliefs—and this not only in the 13th century and not only for religious reasons. It is equally true of poetry and of painting. There are many proofs that Germanisation is a delicate operation. But perhaps this lack of harmony with the world beyond the Rhine and the Alps is due to the fact that Germany carries within herself, like a deep wound, her failure in her vocation as a world conqueror. She has not been like Rome—she has not succeeded in achieving the material and spiritual unity of the world. But she has prepared herself for this task, she has cultivated her originality with this aim in mind, and that is what makes her clash with concepts which seem entirely natural to the Latin peoples of the Mediterranean. Hence the strange position of German art in the history of painting.

Of course, this isolation might cease. Not that the painters of present-day Germany have become integrated with the École de Paris—obviously their experience of our age is entirely different from that of the French or Italian painters—but it so happens that Europe is being de-Latinised and that the concept of beauty is no longer subordinated to Greek or Roman canons. Raphael and Phidias are no longer the universally valid truth. We have discovered Negro truth, Polynesian, Mexican and prehistoric truths, and today a historian would no longer write without hesitation, as seemed natural to scholars at the end of the last century: "Beauty escapes German art; it knows only expression."

Admittedly there is some truth in this remark. Let us say more precisely that Latin—or Italian or Mediterranean—beauty escapes German art. And let us add that the present-day concept of a work of art as the expression at all costs of any particular man, disposes us not only to accept but even to love what once seemed a blemish in the very heart of beauty—namely, that German frenzy which leads them to suggest death by a fly running on a child's face, to insist on the vanity of all things by making of the Virgin's mantle a piece of ragged cloth. All this, which was regarded by Solomon Reinach as the work of maniacs, although it particularly pleased Huysmans, holds our attention as one of the most powerful expressions of certain well-known psychological characteristics. Grünewald may have divided medical opinion on the origin of the sores which cover the body of his Job, but he certainly furnished Freud and his pupils with a magnificent field of studies.

German art did not attain this originality immediately; philosophy and poetry reached their zenith much more quickly. In fact, the gap between language and philosophy on the one hand, and painting on the other, is more noticeable in Germany than in Italy or France. Dante could count among his contemporaries artists such as Giotto, Simone Martini or Lorenzetti. But which German painter can be set against a sage like Master Eckhart, who was the very quintessence of Rhenish mysticism? Which German fresco would correspond to the epics of Gudrun and the Nibelungen? Having written the first satirical political poetry in the German language, Walther von der Vogelweide died about 1230, but that was the period when the prioress Herrade von Landsberg neatly and carefully traced illuminated Byzantine figures on her *Hortus Deliciarum*. And a 12th-century Minnesinger could write of his mistress's glance, which must veil itself like a cloudy star when she sees him and pass over her lover so that none may know the vows they have exchanged.

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No painter, before the middle of the 14th century, ventured into courtly art—not even in Cologne, whose artists might have become the Sienese of the Rhine. To what should we attribute this time-lag? Some kind of national difficulty in painting has occasionally been suggested, but we no longer believe in physical incapacity of this kind. We do, however, have to wait until the beginning of the 14th century, before we encounter the first painters. They cut a very clumsy figure in what has been called an obscurantist world, but it was a world with nothing barbarous about it to judge by the extreme subtlety of feeling and thought which had long been evident in its poets and its mystics, or by the genius of which the sculptors of Bamberg and Naumburg cathedrals had given proof a century earlier. It is not difficult to guess that some contempt coloured the curiosity aroused by their first works. This new art did not attain the mastery of the illuminated manuscripts from France or Italy nor did it represent any advance on the enamels of Limoges or Verdun. We can safely say that in spite of its gold backgrounds and its carved frames, it was considered somewhat meagre in comparison with the polychromatic marvels of contemporary sculpture. Thus it was chiefly looked upon as one element in those immense retables on which painters, sculptors, gilders and goldsmiths worked together, and on which work was carried out exactly in the same way as it is today on a building site. A master foreman called upon different crafts for their contribution. Painting increased the richness of the whole and richness was confused with beauty. Thus, the paintings on the Klosterneuburg retable were executed around the Verdun enamels. In Germany, as in the whole of Europe, these altars have been split up and dispersed among museums and collectors; we are therefore not in a position to judge the painting of that period properly. But the fragments which have come down to us are sufficient to convince us that, in Germany, painting was, from the very beginning, a more complete means of expression than sculpture. In spite of the genius of the sculptor of Naumburg cathedral, in spite of Veit Stoss, the wood-carver, despite Peter Vischer, the master in bronze, it is in painting—no matter how late it developed—that we find assembled the powerful qualities of the Germanic epics, the tenderness of the love poets and that power to transcend common humanity so familiar to the mystics of the Rhine.

At the beginning of the 14th century, when the Empire was more divided and more troubled than ever before, a Meistersinger from Mainz, called Regenbogen—he was a smith by trade—foretold that the Emperor

Frederick Barbarossa would rise from his grave to re-establish order and German greatness. "Then," he announced, "the Empire will be respected from one end of the earth to the other. The Jews will receive baptism. The Emperor will destroy the monasteries and overthrow the power of the priests. Then we shall have peace." These were a poet's illusions. The world was, at the time, a battlefield between Guelphs and Ghibellines which extended into the very streets of Verona, and Romeos and Juliets died victims of the rivalry between papal Montagues and imperial Capulets. But it was not only the men-at-arms who were drawn into this conflict between temporal and non-temporal powers. In the Sorbonne, Siger of Brabant exemplifies the struggle in a different manner. He wanted to separate reason from faith. Everywhere the seamless garment of the Western Christian Empire, which Charlemagne had believed would be everlasting, was rent. Religion was no longer to hold sway over the affairs of men. The German Middle Ages were to be devoted entirely to the reconstruction of the Holy Roman Empire, a useless enterprise which was to further the less ambitious, hair-brained projects of France and Burgundy, whose aim was mere territorial aggrandisement. But these battles between petty kings are of no account compared with the clash between gigantic powers—between Pope and Emperor while a third power, the Fuggers in Augsburg, held the balance, financing both elections and conquests. In fact at this period bankers and merchants contributed more to the unity of Germany than did the great dreams of the Emperors—even although these were sung in verse by the smith Regenbogen. When the ruined nobility lost its power and prestige, these fabulously wealthy burghers, who formed a veritable oligarchy in no way to be compared with the industrial petty-bourgeoisie of Flanders, pushed the country into the isolation of the Reformation and finally gave it its religious unity. But they marked it for ever by failing to conquer the Christian world. However, it was not *after* the achievement of spiritual independence that German painting came of age, but precisely *during* the battles which nearly destroyed the ideas of Papacy and Empire for ever—battles in which Germany herself was the stake but which, at the same time, gave rise to exceptional commercial and intellectual activity.

The sculptors had gone abroad to learn their craft on the building-sites of the French cathedrals, but the painters did not have to leave their cities in order to be fully informed of the artistic life of other countries. It came to them either through monasteries linked to their sister-houses all over the world or through the merchants who travelled from Venice to Lübeck, from Nuremberg to Paris, from Hamburg to Dijon and from Bruges to Augsburg. But it would seem that the genius of Giotto was not an importable commodity as far as the Germans—or the French for that matter—were concerned. Thus the first paintings of the Empire are for devotional purposes—hieratic Madonnas closer to Cimabue's than to Giotto's humble Virgins, or simple dialogues between personages set against a gold background, and taken straight out of illuminated manuscripts. The first paintings of the Empire are to be found in Cologne; but twenty years later, in Prague, works of quite a different calibre saw the light. The King of Bohemia was, at that time, Emperor. Today, when what was once the Holy Roman Empire is more divided than ever, it is difficult to say whether or not the Prague school should be considered a branch of the German school. The distinction—if there is one—is even more difficult to make than that between 14th-century France and Flanders or between France and Burgundy. In fact German historians frequently refer to the Masters of Hohenfurth and Wittingau who, in the writings of Czech experts, become the Masters of Vissy Brod and Trebon; similarly on one side of the frontier a particularly important Madonna is called the Madonna of Glatz and, on the other, the Madonna of Kladso. Similarly the Germans are just as determined to claim Veit Stoss as a master of German sculpture as are the Poles to keep Wit Swosz among their artists. As for the Austrians, they have their own primitive painters whom they consider to be distinct from German primitives.

We can, however, speak of the art of the Holy Roman Empire—which is more or less the art of Central Europe—provided we do not attach too much importance to the influence of politics on the artistic evolution of a country. Central Europe was, at that period, no more Germanised than it is today; and across the boundaries of the innumerable kingdoms, duchies, marquisates and bishoprics of which it was composed, artists had fashioned their own Europe long before the politicians.

The notion of German art proper arose later when the artists were able to emerge from anonymity and when to impose one's own personality meant to impose national originality. Even if German art may be symbolised by the image of a fir tree, laden with snow, or by scenes of great expressionist violence, its beginnings do not, in fact, show any of these traits. They have the same characteristics as Italian, French or Flemish paintings.

THE BEGINNINGS IN COLOGNE

Round about 1330—some say round about 1360—pictures appeared with a gold background on which the human figures were carefully outlined as if they had been traced with a pen. This was an art which still faltered and did not at once show those qualities of elegance which, later on, made it comparable to the art of Siena. At this period it still dealt very simply with episodes from the life of Christ or of the saints in a gilded, mannered style which, in the last resort, was just as stiffly hieratic as art in the age of Rome. These austere, impersonal works nevertheless went with intense religious life. From the 12th century onwards, Franciscan and Dominican monasteries had multiplied. There can be no doubt that women—more than men—bring with them an atmosphere of mysticism. And this applies not only to the communities of lay nuns which grouped themselves around the monasteries, dividing their time between charitable works and religious ecstasy, but to individual cases of extraordinary mystical flights experienced alike by cultured women such as Mechthilde von Magdeburg and ignorant peasant women like Christina von Stommeln, who died in 1312 and whose letters have recently been translated by André Billy. Every night Christina was racked, lacerated and burned by demons and sullied with excrement and toads. She suffered a thousand deaths before, during her attacks of *rigor*, she discovered Gothic Paradises decorated with steeples and towers, laden with jewels, encrusted with lacy stonework. This world of extreme cruelty and superhuman enchantment is the same as that evoked by Master Eckhart whose sermons the lay sisters had read to them. Eckhart tells them that they can identify themselves with Christ and explains that progress towards this identification takes place slowly, in spasms during which one frees oneself of both one's own will and of God's. We may be certain of one thing—for the lay sisters of Cologne brought up on Eckhart or Tauler—Christ did not have the set face and the conventional attitudes given Him by the painter whom about 1330 they commissioned to paint a retable. The painters, for their part, might very easily never have raised their art to higher levels—for it was firmly set in its decorative script and well up to the standard expected by their clients, whether monks or nuns. Painting might have remained at that stage of utilitarian ornament—a stable state if ever there was one. After all the art of the Egyptian painters, based on similar principles, remained static for centuries.

BUT THE ARTISTS had to progress beyond narrative painting. A wealthy prince, Charles IV of Bohemia, elected Emperor in 1333, wished to dazzle the world and make of his city, Prague, an imperial capital. He invited to it French and German architects and Italian painters, who aroused the emulation of the Bohemian artists and soon Prague boasted a cathedral with no less than sixty retables. Each large church felt obliged to have a great number. Castles were embellished and a university—modelled on that of Paris—was founded.

Do we ever know the precise reasons for aesthetic evolution and revolution? Is a wealthy art lover really sufficient? Charles IV, who was the first to turn a city of the Holy Roman Empire into a capital of international rank, no doubt wished to be the equal of Italian dukes and marquises; he undoubtedly wanted to recreate the pomp of the Louvre, where he had been brought up. Cologne, Nuremberg, Augsburg or Lübeck cannot, in fact, claim to have played a similar political or intellectual role at that time. The art which was born at this period in Cologne, in Hesse, or in the mountains of the Tyrol—which was a Hapsburg domain—was local, provincial art which could not stimulate international reactions. So the best artists went to Prague to meet the artists from France, Burgundy and Italy. These artists from Cologne and Vienna where the backs of enamel altar-pieces were decorated with such refinement (the altar of the Klosterneuburg monastery is one of the highlights of Austrian art), or from Bohemia (where there still survives an admirable predella belonging to a retable at Rudince, now lost), all practised an art in which the personages were shown with gestures of such supreme elegance that they seem about to dance on their gold backgrounds surrounded by frames encrusted with precious stones. Prague became the cradle of the New Art.

A series of panels has been discovered in the monastery of Vissy Brod (in German, Hohenfurth). It is one of those cycles representing the life of Christ which were fashionable at the time. Its style places it round about 1350. In the arrangement of the buildings, thrones or graves, in the way the soil is split by thousands of crevasses, which foreshadow the stony landscapes of Mantegna, we can clearly see its relationship with the Klosterneuburg retable; only here the mannered Gothic style which twisted the human figures like branches in the wind, has given way to more solidly constructed forms. The trees grow quite upright against the gold background. They are the olive trees of the mountain on which Jesus prayed; but the painter shows them clipped and rounded as in gardens in the French or Italian style, and on the tree tops birds have perched. The individual pictures are larger than those previously attempted in these countries and the painter was therefore able to depict such details as the tears flowing down the Virgin's face and the innumerable flowers around the stable of the Nativity. It is the first step towards a manner of painting which is no longer merely that of the enlarged miniature.

This period remains very obscure. Hardly anything is known of the foreigners then living in Prague—apart from Tommaso da Modena, two of whose pictures have been found—nor of the painter whom Charles IV entrusted with the decoration of the chapel in his castle at Karlstein. More serious still is the fact that the work of Master Theoderic is extremely difficult to explain. Is there, in fact, any other known example of decorative work consisting of 127 life-size portraits of saints and other religious figures? It is an exceptional work which cannot be fitted into any trend nor ascribed to any influence. The style of the whole and the format of the individual pictures—these are gigantic for a school, which, unlike the Italian, had no tradition of monumental painting—bear the marks of a very real revolution. Here, painting is in fact finally detached from illumination; furthermore, it immediately achieves that particularly refined form of artistic expression—the study of the human face—which usually appears belatedly in the history of the arts and did not become firmly established as a social habit until a century later. But in its initial stages, an art frequently, for a few years, makes a survey of problems which it will only resolve much later and then one by one. For instance, we will see how from 1380 onwards an unknown master created for the Augustine monastery at Trebon (in German, Wittingau) an altar which is undoubtedly the finest 14th-century work produced in the Holy Roman Empire and one which embodies unexpected innovations. The painter of Trebon is an absolute master of his art. These pictures have no more traces of uncertainty nor can they any longer be judged with that hint of sentiment we consider obligatory when confronted with the naïveté of most of the primitives. The work is on a plane with all the great achievements of history. The background, in which landscape now appears, has become a red sky studded with gold, against which the life of Christ is played out in a deeply tragic manner. The unknown artist was not only a very great painter but also an inventor. The faces of the soldiers, caught asleep by the light of the Resurrection, are modelled in chiaroscuro. Chiaroscuro in the 14th century!

Bohemian art never again reached the same heights nor did it progress beyond reproducing lovely smiling Madonnas in frames encrusted with precious stones or decorated with painted silhouettes. And yet, in its day, it attained international stature. Charles IV had succeeded in creating an admirable cultural centre at Prague; but first the Hussite war and then the final loss of the imperial crown to the Hapsburgs were to make it impossible for the Holy Roman Empire to achieve an art which, had it progressed beyond religious subjects, might, in the 15th century, have developed into a courtly style comparable to that of Paris, London or Italy. In the German countries, therefore, to sing the praises of ladies' beauty remained the prerogative of the poets—painting continued to be a religious act. The Court at Prague might have persuaded it to attempt frivolous subjects but it was clearly not in the nature of the German or Bohemian artists to treat them. After Charles IV's death, Maximilian, the "penniless" Emperor, was not likely to wish to inspire those artists he protected to produce elegant paintings. Thus art remained a pious offering, no longer made by the impoverished noblemen, but by the rich burghers. The painter might become the illustrator of humanistic works, the supporter of schismatics and rebels, but he apparently allowed courtly art to pass him by without regret. Cranach alone re-discovered it, but in a quite different spirit: in his case, courtliness had often a savage quality.

THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ARTISTIC CENTRES

Who were these burghers who took over from the Emperors since the latter were not only less wealthy but also too busy saving the ancient vanishing structure of the Holy Roman Empire to act as patrons? They were chiefly merchants. There was, for instance, the Fugger family from Augsburg. Originally, the Fuggers were weavers, but from the middle of the 15th century they traded with Italy, importing spices, cotton and silk, exporting cloth, jewellery and arms. Later, they became bankers and attained financial supremacy; but these determined individualists had as rivals well-organised merchant companies, of which the Hanseatic League was undoubtedly the most powerful. Lübeck maintained constant contacts with Novgorod, Bruges, London, Cologne, Stockholm and Bergen. Charles IV wanted to establish a trade route from Venice to Prague and Hamburg, but the links between Venice, Nuremberg and Augsburg were stronger. Here too, the Emperor was outstripped by his subjects. The merchants were soon to be the most active carriers of the germs of new civilisation across Europe and into Turkey and, shortly after, to Africa, the Far East and America. They sold not only gold, copper, salt and spices; they even sold pictures and prints. Such was the adventurous society for which the painters were to work. It was not an entirely mercantile society, for in it many nobles still played the part of enlightened amateurs, but none of the great lords were as wealthy as the bankers nor could they support the researches of scholars, finance the studies of some talented youth or play their part in the creation of the profusion of altars and hunting scenes. The middle-classes in Germany did not demand—as they did later on in Holland—that art should take them as its subject nor would the painters depict them as other than insignificant donors. Art was decidedly not dedicated to chronicling their history, but to sacred history which, in time, became the stumbling block of the nation.

MASTER BERTRAM AND THE COLOGNE SCHOOL

Because of the lack of a real central power and of a real imperial capital, artistic centres multiplied in the capitals of every duchy, marquisate and bishopric, as well as in the free cities. Art did not have to bow to the whims of a sovereign or follow his inclination; it served the most varied tastes. Hence the complexity of the individual schools which the historians have listed—the school of the Middle Rhine, of Hesse, of Swabia, of Westphalia, Hamburg, Bavaria, the Tyrol and so on. We could easily lose our bearings amid this profusion of geographic terms; but this is a provincialism which, for once, has some good qualities. Instead of retarding artistic evolution, as it did a century earlier, it brought to the problem twenty solutions instead of one. But amid the proliferation of schools personalities were beginning to make themselves felt. The art we have seen emerging in Prague evidently had a certain influence. There is more than one point in common between the Master of Hohenfurth (Vissy Brod) and Theoderic, on the one hand, and Master Bertram of Hamburg on the other. Perhaps Theoderic's faces and the Master of Hohenfurth's treatment of earth and trees reached that great port in the baggage train of Charles IV. But the fine line of the former,

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the tragic sense of the latter are alien to the joyous amplitude of that good limner—Master Bertram. Equally, we are tempted to believe that the work of the Master of Wittingau (Trebon) was not unknown in the rest of Europe; his great simplicity of manner, the great economy of means with which he suggests pain or profound joy, we shall find again in the best pictures of the Cologne Master of St. Veronica, above all, in the *Calvary* in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum, in the *Crucifixion* or the *Death of the Virgin* (page 49) by Konrad von Soest, or in the *Trinity* by the Austrian Master of St. Lambert. But this is the style which French painting was seeking at the time—the school of measure, of expression in depth. Yet, it is not this similarity with French painters or with the Bohemian master which makes the new painters interesting. The study of influences in countries with widespread intellectual currents is usually not fruitful. What characterises these artists is their search for a new kind of composition and expression; St. Veronica displaying the veil marked by Christ's face, the flight of angels around the head of the dead Mary (Konrad von Soest), the figures of the Holy Trinity by the Master of St. Lambert, strike us as completely revolutionary because the picture is no longer conceived of as simply recording a sacred story, but thought of—to use the language of our contemporaries—in purely plastic terms. From the Tyrol to Hamburg, art participated in this upheaval—this first example of self—assertion by the artist which replaced the traditional patterns of painting and in which three contemporary Sienese painters, Sassetta, Giovanni di Paolo and Lorenzetti also shared. The most representative artist of this upheaval and the greatest North German painter at the time was undoubtedly Master Francke, who can be traced in Hamburg round about 1424. His work seems of an extraordinary diversity, and it is sometimes difficult to follow the art historians who attribute to him apparently contradictory pictures. We must, however, apparently resign ourselves to considering side by side the realism of the twisted silhouettes of his *Christ bearing the Cross*, where the faces grimace with cruelty, and the *Entombment*, where the faces are neatly arranged in the haloes and the gestures are still very stiff and traditional. Yet these are two pictures from the same altar. His *Nativity* (page 50), moreover, with its nocturnal landscape, with its grazing sheep and trees almost touching heaven, strikes a new note—the fantastic. The most astonishing work by Master Francke remains his *Man of Sorrows* (page 51) of which two versions are known—one in Leipzig and the other in Hamburg. It is a work of controlled violence and sober emotion showing Christ naked to the waist, marked with the stigmata, and bleeding. The angels surrounding him have just removed the veil which covered him and thus revealed his agony. It is a divine vision. The gestures of each hand, the way in which the fingers are drawn and placed in space, are clearly in advance of the period. Nowhere else do we encounter such sobriety and restraint combined with such tragic expression. Nowhere in the Holy Roman Empire was there to be such a composition or so moving a nude, dominating the foreground of the painting. Everybody agrees that, although so powerful and unusual, this work did not inspire similar attempts. Nor were the experiments of the painters of the early 15th century to be exploited. Their efforts at giving new life to subject matter and composition in a country whose people were still strongly attached to the painting of cycles of the life of Christ or the saints, had only belated results. No doubt, in the country, these forms, with their great clarity, would continue to live on with craftsmen. But it was an art without a future, although it went so well with gold, enamel and precious stones, and had just revealed its originality not by the choice of subject but by daring composition, by enlarging the proportions of the picture, by inventing themes which, after the long years when art had been limited to traditional crucifixions, seemed to prove that there was a great moment of freedom among painters in the various German countries. Should we see in this fact the demand for sacred figures in the churches or else a relaxation of artistic discipline imposed by the priests? Historians of religions have not yet given us a precise answer on this point.

LOCHNER AND MOSER

But the artists were to have other subjects on which to meditate. Take for example two painters, one in Cologne, the other in Swabia, who were to break new ground with their art—Stefan Lochner and Lucas Moser.

Lochner strikes us as much less of an innovator than Moser. Although he did make the traditional journey to Flanders, we can detect this in his paintings only from a few tricks of style—a certain way of modelling, of suggesting space, of being concerned with the visual logic of the picture. Lochner is in fact the quintessence of the "sweetness" of the Cologne school. He is the Master Eckhart of painting although he lived a century later. What we only guessed at in the pictures of the preceding century is now splendidly affirmed. Let us take, for example, the *Paradise Garden* (page 47) by the Master of the Upper Rhine which is dated about 1410 and is in the Städel Institute at Frankfurt. Here is a garden closely shut in behind crenellated walls on which are perched birds of all hues flanked by a monkey and a soldier. An angel is resting, apparently having just killed a little greenish salamander, which seems to represent the Evil One. The Virgin is seated amidst flowers, reading; a saintly woman is teaching the Holy Child music, while two serving-girls are drawing water or picking fruit. The sky is blue like the irises; the Child is clad in white like the lily-of-the-valley; the book is red, like the strawberries, the cherries and the roses. It is a peaceful family Sunday in the country—one of those Sundays when time has been passed making garlands, and the garlands have suddenly become haloes. Paradise remains very human in this painting. The versions which will be presented to us later will seem much more vague and more abstract with their inevitable clouds.

Lochner introduced order into this peaceful, middle-class world and created a sumptuous hierarchy. The *Virgin of the Rose Garden* (page 53) is no longer a young woman seated in the grass. God looks down on her from the top of the picture. The angels tend the Child to whom they offer music and fruit. And while there could be nothing more sweet than taper-bearing choir boys in attendance at the *Presentation at the Temple,* the adoring Magi are rude soldiers of the Teutonic Order who are far from swooning with ecstasy before that squarely built Amazon, the Virgin. Lochner came from South Germany—from the shores of Lake Constance where a much coarser type of art was produced than in Cologne; but in the end he succumbed to the charm and tenderness of the Cologne school. The keynote of his work is to be found in his *Virgin of the Rose Garden*—the sweetness of a perfectly balanced religious world in which everyone is immobile and happy in his station. Clearly, for Lochner, order and happiness were one—a doctrine rarely to be found in German art. No painter had so far taught it with such devotion to the restful virtues of symmetry. It is not difficult to imagine him as a peaceful and devout man, glad to impose restraint on an art which, as we have seen, tended towards imaginativeness. But this pious Christian was also a skilled artist. Some of his children and his Virgins seem sometimes too "pretty," too charming for our present taste for contrasts, yet we cannot but admire the precocity in the modelling of his faces. Because of the "prettiness" of the Cologne school Lochner, unnoticed, introduced the new art of formal construction into the ornamental framework of Gothic altar-pieces. But his position remains ambiguous. He gave the last touches of discipline to the Middle Ages and supreme expression to that mediaeval fervour which is all tenderness, but he was, at the same time, a harbinger. During his lifetime his success and influence were considerable. Schongauer may not have carried on his style but did follow his spirit. Even in Cranach we shall find a hint of his way of modelling faces and in Dürer's painting meet once more his Amazon Virgin, surrounded by Teutonic warriors.

Lucas Moser did not produce such original work. This painter, who is believed to be of the Swabian school, and is best known by the Tiefenbronn retable in Württemberg, does not have Lochner's suppleness. He is much closer to the Middle Ages in his desire to tell a story and in his frequent disregard for visual logic. But he is at the same time more realistic. Thus he places the boat of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Martha in a seascape which bears considerable resemblance to the entrance of the harbour at Marseilles—a resemblance so faithful that it might easily take in the devotees of Les Saintes Maries de la Mer. Similarly, he gives a careful description of the town where the saint and her companions took refuge. And he attempts to let us see the dishes served at the meal at the house of Simon the Pharisee. Compared to Lochner's transcendent realism his realism has a direct impact. We might almost say—with due caution—that he is to Lochner as Van der Weyden is to Van Eyck. Let us imagine a Van der Weyden who is still much attached to the format and rhythm of manuscript painting. Moser, in fact, profited greatly from the journey he made to Flanders. In the Mary Magdalen kneeling to wipe Christ's feet with her hair, in the serving-girl bending down to lay the table, we can find something of Van der Weyden's manner of twisting human figures into supple positions which, at one and the same time, link and separate them—the art of creating space through movement. But it is difficult to trace the frontiers of Flemish painting at this period. Van Eyck, Pol de Limbourg, the Master of Flémalle, Jacques Daret and Rogier van der Weyden triumphed not only in Flanders but throughout Europe. Bruges held sway as far as Venice. We must not forget that artistic exchanges were just as frequent then as they are today. Lochner played his part in the art of his time, which was Flemish in Flanders, German in Germany, and French in France.

Lochner in fact was able to assimilate the brilliance of Van Eyck into his own style and to transfigure it. Moser certainly seems more open to formal innovations—he accepts them in a more direct fashion, without

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recreating them. Thus in the Tiefenbronn altar it is particularly interesting to compare the entirely Flemish skill of the movements of Mary Magdalen and the servant girl with the false perspective of the sleeping bishop. Here we have a contrast, of which there are many examples in the German primitives, between tradition and acquired foreign fashions—contrasts which, as we have seen, explain these painters' lack of virtuosity and their uneasiness when faced with innovations from outside.

But Moser and Lochner are only the transition between mediaeval idealism and the new realism. In Germany—as throughout Europe—the first half of the 15th century was a period of great pictorial richness. One movement succeeded another, coming hard on each other's heels. The number of artistic centres added to the diversity of styles. Presumably artistic life was the same as it is today, so what must the feelings of art lovers have been when faced with this profusion of pictorial ideas—what were they to think of their rapid succession whose logic was naturally not as apparent to them as it is to us now? We can wager that, Cassandra-like, they had the word "decadence" always on their tongues.

MULTSCHER AND WITZ

Nowadays we find it right and proper to deal with Moser and Lochner before such realistic painters as Multscher and Witz, but to do so is to disregard dates. The Tiefenbronn altar by Lucas Moser, completed in 1431, is only six years earlier than the one at Wurzach on which Multscher was to show us the four soldiers who frame the *Resurrection of Christ* weighed down by sleep and by the weight of their accoutrements, which gives them an almost rock-like quality. It is an extraordinary picture. The guards are slumped at its four corners and Jesus emerges from the tomb, rising through the grave stone, and lifts two fingers in a world where, through the chinks in their armour, men reveal only the faces of brutes, creased necks, hideous ears and killers' hands.

Similarly the *Draught of Fishes* (1444) (page 57) by Konrad Witz, now in Geneva, precedes Stefan Lochner's *Presentation at the Temple* by three years. It is one of the first landscapes in painting with its little lake, stretched out below Mont Blanc, with the Geneva countryside surrounding a Christ, enveloped in voluminous drapery, from which there emerges the finger which miraculously fills Peter's fishing nets with all the trout and grayling of the Lake of Geneva. We must compare these four works. Admirable as Lochner and Moser are, they nevertheless appear out of date compared with Witz and Multscher who are perhaps not such good artists. If we were to make comparisons between various "masters", then the pleasing neatness of Lochner's Virgins against their background of rose bushes merits more admiration than the roughness of Konrad Witz which is sometimes so close to clumsiness. But in that case it is equally certain that Multscher, who is more skilled than Witz, and more receptive to the forms already established by the Flemings, should hold our attention longer. Now, Konrad Witz, unpleasant though he may be, strikes us as a considerable master and one of the great figures in the history of art.

His most famous work does not acquaint us with him completely. The landscape with the Lake of Geneva in which he set the *Draught of Fishes* deserves the renown it acquired as one of the first pictures to put man in the centre of the real world and no longer in a décor where the trees and rocks could have been replaced by signs with the word *tree* or *mountain* as used to be the custom on the stage. That Christ, on the shore of the lake, is the equivalent of the *Virgin of the Chancellor Rolin,* which Jan van Eyck painted round about 1430, where we see the Holy Child against the background of a thickly populated town. In both pictures we sense a desire to make the legend more contemporary, to humanise it—a desire which had always manifested itself in the contemporary clothing of the persons depicted, but which had not yet gone as far as to say to the viewers—in this case, as far as Witz is concerned, the faithful of St. Peter's cathedral in Geneva—Christ is among us now, in the surroundings which you have before you day and night.

Witz's other works undoubtedly have neither the same scope nor evoke the same response as the *Draught of Fishes.* They hold our attention however by the violence with which Witz transformed his pictures into veritable tempests of drapery. On the gold backgrounds which he kept for tradition's sake—although he frequently permitted himself "interiors" —his portraits of male and female saints, his rendering of the presentation of Cardinal de Mies to the Virgin, his generals with their highly polished armour rise up like folded mountain ranges in peaks and chains, painted with extraordinary relief. Gold, stone, steel and folds—that is how Witz paints. It is unbearable if we have just been looking at a Lochner or examining the details of the caricatured faces which Multscher painted long before Dürer or Leonardo sought to codify all human characteristics, for we can still place such artists in the general evolution of art; but Witz the painter of giant figures with monumental draperies, such as, a few centuries earlier, had fought in the Nibelungenlied, remains a solitary phenomenon. If he exercised any influence, it was only in those cases where there was some affinity, some proximity of temperament. Several links can be found between Witz, Pacher and Reichlich. We are assured that Pacher looked more towards Italy and Cosimo Tura than towards his compatriot Witz. Perhaps Tura, the painter from a region of Italy attuned to Germany, himself saw paintings by Witz and profited from their study. It has been laid down once and for all that the current of artistic influences flowed from Italy to Germany. May it not sometimes have flowed the other way?

It is obvious however that Witz is exploiting a foreign fashion when he unfurls his draperies in the four corners of his pictures and hangs them on the furnishings—it is a Flemish fashion. But something which in Bruges was a quietist element in the picture, becomes in Witz a pretext for the monumental and the enormous. It is more than the personal expression of an international current, more than the pictorial translation of a gift for sculpture. Witz was one of the first explorers of space, into which he entered in a spirit of adventure and with visible pleasure. This is very evident in the *Draught of Fishes* with its panorama fading into the mountains of Savoy, in the way he has of cramming the foreground of the picture itself with more mountains, with cuirasses, with togas hanging in great folds or with the leaf of the golden door which stands out on the left of the picture and thrusts St. Anne, her halo and the window which towers above her a couple of yards further into the background. Witz is the contemporary of Uccello. His search for volume, for form daringly stressed in space, certainly appears clumsy compared with that of the Italian, who is all restraint, order and science. Nevertheless, the experiments of both artists are exactly parallel; but Witz worked in a more instinctive way than Uccello, that great master and skilled mathematician.

It is precisely this withdrawal, this reliance on inner forces—that last stronghold against the success of foreign painters—which constitutes the supreme originality of German artists who must have been deeply moved to find themselves preferred to Italians and Flemings. For these foreign masters were held up to them as an example. They knew the extent of the difference between their position and that of the foreign masters; as Dürer was to say sadly when he left Venice for Nuremberg: "Here I am a gentleman, at home I am only a parasite." They saw quite clearly the direction in which they were being pushed by the taste of art lovers; but although their country did not accept them as they were, tolerated them only when they remained within the tradition or took their inspiration from foreign fashions, they succeeded, pulled to and fro though they were between the traditionalists and the snobs of their time, in creating characteristic German works—Lochner more than Moser, Witz more than Multscher. Their work was uneven and we can see from it how the artist was torn between his borrowings. For instance, there is the *Meeting at the Golden Gate* by Witz in which gold backgrounds, dead flat haloes and space suggested with extraordinary daring can be found side by side. The gold is a survival of the past, but Witz did not take the idea of the wing of the gate from any foreign master. And it is this trick, this extraordinary solution of a problem which is insoluble because illogically stated, that lends such interest to the picture.

Similarly, several years later we find a picture by Hans Holbein the Elder, the *Basilica of St. Paul*, the centre of which is occupied by a woman sitting with her back to us, showing under her enormous straw hat only a splendid neck. Then there are the mythological scenes painted by the German artists—bearded Orpheus charming the animals in a village landscape by Hans Leu or *Pyramus and Thisbe* by Manuel Deutsch, killing each other with a sword bigger than themselves. There would always be a touch of what the text books call the "bizarre" in the German painters. It is a quality which would lead them to paint the first landscapes and the first night scenes, to produce portraits of a staggering likeness, to become the rulers of a world which still seems so real to us today because it preserves its unexpectedness, that hint of something which is the open sesame to all follies and all heresies, in fact to any truth which is not common currency.

Did these painters owe their bizarreness to the fact they were dispersed throughout the Holy Roman Empire? What at the beginnings of German art was a paralysing influence has become the main motive of their extraordinary daring. It would be too much to say that every great German artist was isolated—a sort of Van Gogh sitting in his native town brooding over something which anywhere else was an idea, but with him had become an obsession—but was there any painter outside Germany who did not bear that mark of loneliness to a greater or less degree? Admittedly compared to the Italians, each working in an artistic capital amongst other artists, the Germans seem solitary beings, snatching at information which came to them only in bits and pieces. But their dispersal alone is insufficient to explain the peculiarities of their art. French painting, at that same period, was just as provincial and yet showed a remarkable unity. However, it would seem that the Central European painter aimed less at constructing a complete world in a picture than at pushing the idea which animated him to its extreme. Apparently he left it to his life as a whole to bring some order and some general meaning to his work. Such is the case as far as Konrad Witz is concerned. We have said above that we had to wait for the first great personalities to assert themselves before we saw the birth of a truly national German art. Should we take Witz as the starting point for the development of national characteristics? It would undoubtedly be absurd to use this as a pretext to exclude Lochner from German art, but is it not in Witz that these first distinguishing marks, these first contradictions, these first German traits strike us particularly?

THE FLEMISH INFLUENCE

However, if we consider the evolution of German art after Witz, during the second half of the 15th century, he strikes us as an accidental phenomenon. Witz's successors followed fashion too much and admired their Flemish neighbours too greatly. German art found itself under the domination of Rogier van der Weyden and Dirk Bouts, just as later French art was dictated by the Italians at Fontainbleau. But that certainly is not to say that, in its Flemish guise, it lost all interest. The Master of the Legend of St. Ursula, the Master of the Life of Mary, the Master of Liesborn, Hans Pleydenwurff, Derick Baegert, Hinrik Funhof, Herman Rode, did not give in. But what we found so clearly expressed and so original in Witz, we shall now no longer have to seek in the concept of the work but in its details—in a landscape which suddenly appears in the background of an altar, in the juxtaposition of a warrior's coat on the one hand, and two horses' heads on the other, in the way the Holy Child in the arms of the Virgin by the Master of the Altar of St. Bartholomew suddenly acquires an insect-like quality, in a particularly empty space between the personages in the *Birth of the Virgin* (page 61) by the Master of the Life of Mary, in the brilliant colour of the angel who appears to St.

Ursula in a dream or in the dead Christ—a genuine portrait this by the same painter, the Master of the Legend of St. Ursula. Have we gone too far in our search not for kinship but for nationality at all costs? Certainly not, for even in Flemish guise the German character can still be distinguished if only in the sparkle of the eyes of old Count Georg von Löwenstein, whose portrait Hans Pleydenwurff painted with terrifying precision down to the withered ear, the parchment-like skin and the pursed, toothless mouth.

Let us look at this portrait for a moment. Compared to the religious compositions by the same painter, compared to the rarer "lay" compositions, such as the *Hunt of Duke Tassilo* (page 60) from the Polling altar, which shows that not all painting at that time was devoted to God, it strikes one as extraordinarily realistic. If we consider it out of its day and age, so that its time and place in the evolution of art no longer matter, but only the miracle of the portrait, then all we seek in it is the dialogue between painter and model—a miracle of the kind that occurs only at culminating moments in the history of art. And the Count von Löwenstein is the typical example of one of these crucial points. Faced by this portrait we say to ourselves that painters might well have continued to paint like this and did, in fact, do so. But we must also resign ourselves to the thought that, sooner or later, such perfection becomes unbearable to its contemporaries who then throw themselves into the first aesthetic adventure which comes along.

Just as at the beginning of an artistic cycle, the experiments of the individual painters lead them on to widely different discoveries, to experiences which history will not repeat until much later, so at the peak of such cycles, artists display great receptivity. A man like Martin Schongauer, who under Flemish influence painted the *Nativity* which is reproduced on page 62, also painted a *Virgin of the Rose Garden* which Lochner brought up to date; but he was also capable of such unexpected flashes of realism as the wicker-basket which he placed at the feet of the *Holy Family* in Vienna, or better still, the face of St. Joseph, modelled in chiaroscuro from the same picture. In fact, there were a thousand possibilities for men who emerged at a time when an art form was at its peak to indulge their curiosity to the full without in any way denying their aesthetic ideal. This does not apply only in painting. It is, of course, outside our scope to speak of German etchers, but how can we ignore the work of the Master of the Pennons or of the Master of the Hausbuch

—also known as the Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet—or even Schongauer's engravings, of which more examples have come down to us than of his paintings? There too, the ease and skill of the artists is obvious not only in the technique but also in their choice of subjects; for whereas the painter left the religious domain only to venture into the art of the portrait, the engraver—no doubt because a print could be hidden whilst the picture was rare outside a church—demonstrates the freedom of the arts. Here we find numerous studies of exotic animals and popular scenes. Here too there are many licentious subjects: amorous bathing parties, ladies of easy virtue dressed in fantastic costumes parading to and fro, as well as more definitely erotic works of which Cranach and Baldung Grien were the first to produce an equivalent in painting. The technique of these masters of engraving is admirable. All along the Rhine Dürer studied it during the journey prescribed by custom which was to make a master of him. In it he found more than the ability to resolve certain problems of craftsmanship; he found an open, unprejudiced, many-sided attitude of mind, self-mastery and truly classical equilibrium.

We have now, according to the historians, reached the end of the Middle Ages. The revolution of the Renaissance is approaching and in Germany, it is Dürer who will carry it out. It is certain that after Dürer no one would paint such crucifixions as Rueland Frueauf still painted at the end of the 15th century, or like the one by the Master of the Hausbuch at Darmstadt, nor would they paint martyrdoms like the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* (page 66) by Hans Holbein the Elder, dated 1516. Giorgione and Leonardo would make these fashions of painting outmoded—fashions which except in details and style had scarcely changed for a whole century since the Master of St. Veronica or Konrad von Soest.

But all the things we find so marvellously new in Dürer are already to be found in the figure of the monk who clasps the foot of the cross so tightly in the *Crucifixion* by the Master of the Hausbuch. Similarly we cannot help asking whether Martin Schongauer's *Nativity* is not in all points equal to Dürer's *Nativity* from the Paumgartner altar. It would be difficult to find in Dürer a more obvious display of virtuosity in perspective than in Schongauer's treatment of the architectural elements. And if we compare the engravings of the Master of the Hausbuch and of Martin Schongauer with those of Dürer it is by no means easy to convince ourselves that a world of thought separates them. As for the realism of Dürer's portrait of Oswald Krell, we have already met it in the portrait of the Count von Löwenstein. We have a slight tendency to praise the new painters for what was already there in their predecessors. But they had not organised their achievements, had failed to present them systematically, and we today are too fond of systems, their juxtapositions and their interconnections.

The same, no doubt, applies to the history of art in every country. Yet, in Germany, the passage from the mediaeval to the Renaissance spirit was effected very slowly. It is not easy to single out the moment of rupture. So much so, that one might doubt whether it ever really took place, were it not for certain pictures which remind us of the evidence. There is an abyss between Cranach's dramatic *Crucifixion* (page 79), painted in 1503, where the crosses rise into a tragic sky, and the factual account of the same event which Frueauf painted seven years earlier, in 1496 (page 67).

Undoubtedly the transition took place more rapidly in Flanders owing to the daring of Quentin Metsys, the skill of Gossaert and of Van Orley who were able, much more easily than the Germans, to introduce into their calm perfection the new rhythms and that depth in their pictures which came from Italy. But it is true to say that a parallel evolution took place in Bruges and in the Rhine valley; the same impetus united the two provinces. Yet it may well be that more examples of that cruelty which has come to be considered a German characteristic, are encountered in Flemish than in German art. Certainly, the violence of a Hans Hirtz—the care he takes to make his models bristle with murderous weapons, to make the blood flow, to show the flesh gaping under their blows—may be considered examples of that furious obsessional desire to show human violence wreaked upon the most wretched of mankind. In German painting on the other hand, we very seldom find descriptions of Hell or of the various tortures inflicted on the various saints; the Flemings—from Bosch to Breughel—indulged in them. These are themes which German artists reserved for engravings, perhaps they thought of them as products of the confessional rather than as pictures for public exhibition.

MICHAEL PACHER

However, the whole of the Holy Roman Empire did not evolve in the same way as Flanders. In Southern Germany—and decentralisation of art is typical of Germany—there was a painter who undertook what has been somewhat pompously called the "spatial revolution". He was the Austrian, Michael Pacher. The spirit and composition of his work are obviously very close to that of his contemporary, Cosimo Tura of Ferrara. There is the same angular line, the same family of faces animated by different expressions, the same way of constructing human figures with what one might almost call a mechanical knowledge of anatomy. But, unlike Pacher, Tura did not have to cope with overwhelming altar sculpture. Thus, in the *Altar of the Fathers of the Church* (page 64), Pacher was compelled to paint his compositions inside Gothic frames of great ornamental wealth and of an extraordinary vegetal power, this perhaps explains his vigorous, almost sculptural manner of painting. He had no other way of imposing his painting, of making it at least the equal of the sculpture. At all events his Holy Fathers appear under canopies, on episcopal thrones, amidst Gothic sculptures painted in *trompe l'oeil,* exactly as the saints emerged from the brush of Mantegna among a profusion of floral ornaments in the Ermetani church at Padua. For, behind Tura, we must see Mantegna, the great master whose works were admired both by Burgkmair and Pacher, and later by Dürer. There is a certain piquancy in the fact that the painter who was among the first to learn much from Italian perspective and was one of the most modern artists of his time, should appear so deeply attached to the Gothic décor. But the most advanced of his pictures, such as the *Martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket* in Graz and the panels of the St. Wolfgang altar show even more clearly the true motive powers behind his painting. Pacher was a master of perspective; he brought into German art the first organised perspectives of a building from floor to ceiling. The *Circumcision* from the St. Wolfgang altar, the *Martyrdom of St. Thomas à Becket* are, like Mantegna's *Martyrdom of St. James,* seen from ground level and thus reveal the saints as giants standing out powerfully between the marble columns from which there soars up the interlaced ridging of the vaulted roofs. Similarly, in the *Interment of Becket,* the eye is led from the handles of the wooden litter on which the saint is lying, to the first arches of the nave; it descends on to the glass windows whose alternating colours taper off to the left, whilst towards the centre of the picture Pacher has created a line of perspective which runs through a door of the church, into the street, up to the watch tower, which in turn leads on into the open country. Space is no longer, as heretofore, left undefined in the bluish background of the landscape.

Pacher had a certain number of pupils, in particular Marx Reichlich who also filled his pictures with the long perspective of the arcades in his native town, leading up to the mountains which dominate the houses. It was Reichlich who gave us the first true landscapes of Austrian cities—landscapes which a single trip to Innsbruck is sufficient to evoke once more. Thus, via Italy, Pacher and Reichlich resumed the experiments of Konrad Witz. But apparently their influence did not extend beyond Southern Germany. We must bear in mind that Pacher is first heard of in 1467 and died in 1498, while in 1506, Rueland Frueauf the Elder was painting gaudy pictures which are only Konrad von Soest adapted to the taste of the day. Such is the futility of revolutions!

THE NEW RESTRAINT

Thus, at the very height of the period when ground won was being felicitously exploited, Michael Pacher, by adhering to a new style of spatial construction, heralds the metamorphosis of painting. In view of achievements of painters like Schongauer or the Master of the Legend of St. Ursula, we may well ask ourselves whether this sudden passion for architectural perspectives, for figures whom fashion forces to take up the most uncomfortable postures—lying forward or bent backward or shot from above, as they would say in the cinema—was more than formalism. It is certain that the "architecturomania" of Pacher, as later that of Dürer, who in the Paumgartner altar for instance, allows himself to give it full rein, made a great contribution to German painting—more skilled and more complete organisation, the illusion of being the complete master of the work, of leaving nothing vague, of subordinating everything to restraint. But, like all fashions, it is also an irritating mania, and we are no doubt all the more sensitive to it in German painting because it does not seem to emerge with the same spontaneity as in Venice, Bologna or Florence. Once again it is borrowed.

There is a temptation to say that it ran contrary to German nature; yet it inspired exceptionally successful works. Indeed, German painters, who were on this occasion attracted by a manner of looking at art rather than by a style, developed in a more original way within that manner and succeeded in including in it various things which had been forbidden to painters of altars. These were that imaginativeness, that freedom, that fantastic quality which had been the prerogative of the engravers.

The Renaissance was therefore beneficial in Germany. It inspired the greatest painters in her artistic history. Never again would Germany have a century so rich in great names. But did Cranach, Altdorfer, Grünewald or Holbein really follow up the new technique of which Dürer made himself the German apostle? Did Dürer have much success with the textbook he called *Speis der Malerknaben—Food for the Apprentice Painter?* The new spirit brought in its wake not only the desire to become a geometer, a virtuoso of perspective; it also liberated, under the mask of archaeology and admiration for ancient civilisations, a whole national mythology—half Christian, half pagan—which was first freely used by the poets and had survived, as we have said above, only in the hands of the engravers. In fact, the German themes of the Middle Ages would be treated by the painters of the Renaissance.

True, neither Dürer with his earnestness, nor Grünewald with his piety, were the most fervent adherents of this re-emerging mediaevalism, for they were too preoccupied with problems of the fate of man and the destiny of their epoch. They felt the religious problems which led up to the Reformation and the Peasant Revolt too deeply to give the best days of their lives to that flowering, if not of ancient themes, then at least of a sensibility which had too long been stifled. But a man like Altdorfer who painted knights resting in some forest from their search for the Holy Grail, a man like Cranach, master of curious scenes in which Greek legend is only the pretext for the resurrection of ancient dreams, transferred pictures from the public altar and the private chapel to the study, there to take their place alongside the carefully preserved illuminated manuscripts and engravings. Pictures were no longer merely votive objects but objects to be collected.

The end of the 15th and the whole of the 16th century were indeed Germany's great age—an age not only of the great masters in art, but of adventure. First Maximilian and then Charles V would extend the Holy Roman Empire to the four corners of Europe and into the New World. This enormous power disintegrated not so much under the blows of external enemies as of its own accord under pressure from that purely Germanic force—Luther. If only Charles V had become a Lutheran! Did he ever think, in the Spanish monastery where he ended his days, that the moment when he was within reach of a Hapsburg hegemony coincided with the shift of opinion that would destroy the old dream of Christian unity under the double—at once parallel and complementary—rule of Pope and Emperor? How many hopes had been placed on it, how many truths and how much idealism staked. It was a period, when the most hostile groups, the most diametrically opposed philosophies could feel themselves equally close to triumph; it was a period of general exaltation. Was Germany moving towards expansion or towards a withdrawal into herself? All sides were confident of victory, but it was Luther who carried the day; the hope of living in harmony with the Pope and Italy had to be abandoned. The door which had been opening more widely on the immense plastic adventure of the Italian peninsula was closed again. The complete flowering of German art, which we are about to witness, clearly indicates the nature of German feeling towards Italy—that is to say admiration of the arts and fear of Roman corruption, which was denounced long before the birth of Lutheranism. Hence the parallel progress of an Italianate plastic style and of the development of German inspiration. The phenomenon of the Renaissance was to be much more national in Germany than anywhere else; and in Germany it would find a much more original form than in Flanders or France.

ALBRECHT DÜRER

BECAUSE HE POSSESSED all the curiosity, all the pride, all the quirks, in fact all the qualities of this revolution, Dürer is its complete incarnation. More so than Grünewald who concentrated on the German theme, more so than Cranach who, with a lightness of touch which Dürer must have considered incompatible with the dignity of a painter, exploited the erotic taste of the Landsknechts, more so than Holbein, who was by way of being a fashionable portraitist. Who were Dürer's contemporaries? Botticelli, Signorelli, Mantegna, Carpaccio, Ghirlandaio, Perugino, Leonardo da Vinci, Nicolas Froment, Quentin Metsys, Hieronymus Bosch and Memling—these were the figures of the artistic scene when he was 19. Leonardo was already 38 years old and a master; but Dürer's beginnings were under the influence of Mantegna. Him he copied and was inspired by his occasional satirical vigour. He loved his meticulous manner of drawing and his confident strength. At the end of Dürer's life—he died in 1528—the Italian masters were Michelangelo, Titian, and Raphael. It was the first wave of the Renaissance, represented by Giovanni Bellini, whom he met in Venice, by Carpaccio, Piero della Francesca and Mantegna, which was to be important for him and for German painters as a whole. He discovered extreme daring in Giorgione, who decorated the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice at the expense of the Serenissima, whilst the Germans invited Dürer to paint a retable for the church of their Venetian parish.

State Museum, LUCKNOW.

But the experiments of the Venetians, like those of Raphael or Michelangelo, remained alien to him. His place was in the international avant-garde movement which held that the painter can conquer the world through the art of number and perspective. One of Dürer's engravings, the *Presentation at the Temple,* was reproduced from 1505 onwards in the *Treatise on Perspective* by Giacomo Pellegrino. Did not Leonardo da Vinci at the same period illustrate Jacopo dei Barbari's *Treatise on Proportion?*

Of all the Germans, Dürer undoubtedly believed most profoundly in the new theories—in the idea that art must travel the road of science. These new ideas he conceived of as the continuation of all the physical and metaphysical studies of the Middle Ages. It is on this point that he differs fundamentally from Leonardo da Vinci with whom, however, he has so many ideas in common, among them—strangely enough—the concept of the artist as hero. Leonardo, in fact, devoted himself much more to experimental science than Dürer, who continued to consider fruitful the interplay of symbols, inner knowledge and the results of deduction. Attached though he was to experimental truth, to the truth of the compass, he nevertheless handed down ancient knowledge. He was clearly torn between humanist aspirations and his attachments to mediaeval moralities in which Talmudic, Moslem, Christian and pagan legends were so fruitfully mixed. The Lutheran revolution, by leading him back to the most simple Christian ideas, only reinforced his doubts. Thus at the time of Luther's excommunication we find him renouncing profane subjects. Henceforth he devoted himself exclusively to religious painting or to portraits of well-known individuals. His most captivating work is that in which the new aesthetics and the ancient mediaeval themes are so freely mingled, in his allegories, apocalypses and dances of death, in his figures of Adam and Eve set amidst symbolic animals—a whole world whose crowning glory is undoubtedly the enigmatic *Melancolia.* But Dürer once again is much freer in his engravings than in his paintings. It is as if painting were censured, whilst engraving escaped all scrutiny. Besides, German art lovers were not as generous as Italian patrons; they ordered their portrait or an altar picture and that was about the sum of it. In Germany, there was no Lorenzo the Magnificent, no Leo X, no Julius II. Frederick of Saxony did not rise to their heights and commissions for retables were nothing compared to orders for frescoes. An ancient framework cannot contain a revolutionary form. Italian fresco painters were fortunate in that church architecture evolved a parallel style to painting. Dürer and Grünewald were condemned to the retable panel, to the difficult predella, and although Dürer's frames were not as ornate as those on which Michael Pacher painted his figures, the woodwork of Grünewald's Isenheim altar is still in the Gothic spirit. We must think of Dürer in Nuremberg as a man of the avant-garde, surrounded by disciples and cutting a figure as an innovator as head of the New School, yet at the same time shut in by a whole Gothic world which, although it glowed with perfect beauty, was slow in dying and allowed the painter only such rudimentary humanistic themes as traditional painters had already treated—St. Jerome reading and portraits of humanists flourishing books like banners. The only fantasy allowed was in allegorical engraving and morality scenes long familiar to book illustrators.

It was undoubtedly this Gothic paralysis which gave Dürer's Renaissance that painful air of gravity, of restricted power which is characteristic of him and further accentuates our impression that Germany was out of tune with the outside world. He is so natural in his engravings and so ill at ease in his paintings.

Dürer did everything in his power to free his pupils from this paralysis. He wrote four volumes intended to put the Germans on the same independent footing as the Italians. But although his books were successful—they were very soon translated into various languages—they did not have the effect which their author might have expected. Among his pupils, among the painters who were influenced by him to a greater or lesser extent, we undoubtedly find the best artists of his time—Grien, Burgkmair, Cranach, Altdorfer, Suess von Kulmbach, Hans Sebald, Barthel Beham and Georg Pencz—but apart from the new dimensions which they saw him apply in his work, what did they find in Dürer except encouragement to paint mediaeval subjects which the master of Nuremberg himself had not dared to use outside his engravings?

GRÜNEWALD

But was it true that genius could not express itself fully unless it zealously meditated on the lessons provided by the Italians? The work of Mathis Gothardt Neithardt, known as Grünewald, provides an answer to our question. He did not seek to renew the architecture of the altar-piece; he was not concerned with logic; he did not need to show man as the heart of the universe, and therefore to make an inventory of the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdoms. His work is the equivalent of that great cry of mystical passion which St. Brigid uttered two centuries earlier in her *Revelations,* which Grünewald illustrated. Brigid of Sweden wanted to lead the Italian Pope and mankind back to faith. Grünewald no doubt thought this task more than ever necessary in his own time. For Grünewald, in the 16th century, as for Christine von Stommeln in the 14th, Paradise was Gothic. His angels make music against a background of stone flowers, arches and rosettes, more daring than anything the most flamboyant sculptors had ever attempted. His world seems full of disquieting shadows; from them there emerge the most terrible demons that ever tortured a mystic or a St. Anthony, and lights radiating with extreme softness round the faces of the saints. His men are beasts who have beaten Christ and have transformed Him into a bleeding carcase hanging nailed to a cross. St. John the Baptist points to it with his hand: Ecce Homo. And who knows? Perhaps only the putrid leper, who writhes with pain as the monsters lay hold of St. Anthony, will be saved. Did not St. Hildegard say: "God does not inhabit healthy bodies." Thus at the beginning of the 16th century the characteristics of mediaeval thought find their greatest pictorial expression through the brush of Grünewald. What of his landscape? In it we find the lichen-covered, tentacled trees of the Black Forest with among them an extraordinary palm-tree, inserted to explain St. Paul's oriental hermitage. But the palm-tree is there for a historical not a geographical reason; for Grünewald, the Christian tragedy takes place, neither in Palestine nor in Germany, but within himself. Admittedly he does not ignore the aesthetics of his time. He too knows how to give a lesson in perspective with his beautiful series of Gothic arches in the *Annunciation,* or with the soldiers dazed by the light of the resurrected Christ and huddling in the shadows of their sleep and their armour. Moreover he knows how to construct his figures not by a daughtsman's technique, which pulls them into the lyrical rhythm of the work, but by the use of firmly-knit masses. He has the courage to produce startling deformations, such as had never before been attempted. But it is more than likely that these daring gestures surprised the German public less than certain pictures by the avant-garde theoretician Dürer. Everything in them had been reinvented in that spirit—the German spirit—which the Rhenish mystics, Multscher and Witz, explored. Today we are afraid of nationalist tags and not without reason. They have enclosed art too much between geographical frontiers which it has frequently ignored. But we must recognize that the flowering of a personality like Grünewald's coincides with the flowering of national originality.

HANS BALDUNG GRIEN AND ALTDORFER

The other painters of this period do not offer work of such scope or of such even quality. They felt the effects of the Italian influence much more than Dürer who knew how to canalise and Germanise it. Their evolution was typical of that uneasiness of German artists when faced with a foreign style which we have mentioned above. Thus we find Hans Baldung Grien painting nudes sometimes in a German style, sometimes in an almost entirely Italian manner. Like Cranach, he either tried to paint with supreme elegance, in an almost Gothic manner, or else attempted the most difficult exercises in perspective and volume. But his nudes always tell a story—Death embracing a beautiful woman, witches with torches, a demoniacal goat, and a goblet full of homunculi. The diabolical theme occurs frequently in Baldung Grien, who took delight in painting and engraving the deeds and misdeeds of witches. When in the century of humanism, Baldung, who was a master of the art of engraving, produced such strange scenes as a witches' Sabbath, the bewitching of a stable boy or that ancient morality of Aristotle serving as steed to his mistress Phyllis, he proclaimed his extraordinary fidelity to mediaeval legend. Although these nudes have charm, his masterpiece is undoubtedly the Nativity which he continually painted in numerous variations with ox and donkey, St. Joseph and the Virgin and the angels surrounding the Child, from whom all light emanates. Here we have, if not the first night studies, at least the first works in which the principle of chiaroscuro was logically developed. A world entirely new to painting opens up for Baldung Grien—the bright gleam of light on Mary's hair, on the horns of the ox, on Joseph's hands, on the ruins of the stable at which the travellers have rested, in the moon's blue and reddish-yellow halo. There is no doubt that it is with his night scenes that Baldung Grien chiefly holds our attention today. Otherwise, his work is on a large scale but not without a certain heaviness. It thus forms a vivid contrast to that contemporary of the master of landscape Albrecht Altdorfer, who also painted moving night scenes. His style is an intense mass of lines, of nervous brushwork glittering like the leaves of a forest. For Altdorfer was a painter of forests. He was certainly the first to dare to tackle the landscape, which was considered too simple and too uninteresting a subject unless some incident involving the human figure was taking place in it. He thus laid the foundation for the reputation of the German landscape, which was to invade Europe, and particularly Italy, to such an extent that, as Vasari wrote, there was not in his time a cobbler's booth but was decorated with a German landscape. Thus German and Flemish painters—and we must include among them such masters as Patenier and Bles—offered to the Italian public, who were used to large mural decorations, small detailed pictures, painted with a fine brush in the good old style. It is natural that this revival of mediaeval taste should have been favourably received in countries which fundamentally, had been subjected to Italian influence in spite of themselves. But they contrived to satisfy the desire for the subjects dealt with in illuminated manuscripts.

Thus Altdorfer, in painting the *Battle of Alexander* (page 83), merely transposed on to a panel miniatures like those in the *History of the Destruction of Troy the Great,* which bears the signature of the Colombes and is dated about 1500. In the same way, the fantastic building in his *Susanna at her Bath* (page 82) is also a replica of astonishing architectural structures, great set pieces with thousands of ornaments, which the miniaturists of the day loved to depict and which will nostalgically survive in the pictures of Antoine Caron.

While he produced work for all those who regretted the minutely detailed style of the past, Altdorfer nevertheless surpassed the miniaturists both in skill and his vision of nature. For whereas in his *Battle of Alexander* he intended to convey a cosmic image of a struggle witnessed by the moon and the sun, in one of his *Views of the Danube near Ratisbon,* he was careful to avoid any emphasis on the heroic, to be as exact as the Dutch landscape painters would be in their day. Here he had the courage to paint a sky such as had never been painted before; in the so-called "minor" landscape genre, with its technique of small brush strokes and truly narrative spirit, he at once followed the tradition of the miniaturists and foreshadowed the modern landscape. We have said that Dürer is the incarnation *par excellence* of the Renaissance; Altdorfer may be said to have quietly carried out an equally important revolution without theories and without shocking his contemporaries in any way.

THE LANDSKNECHTS

In Switzerland, Nikolaus Manuel Deutsch, who served as a Landsknecht in the campaigns against the Pope, Urs Graf and Hans Leu painted strange allegories—Greek scenes in the German fashion with the protagonists dressed in extraordinary costumes and wearing incredible hats. But their originality is perhaps less obvious in these bizarre effects. It is more striking in the setting they provide for them; they are landscapes of thick Alpine forests, where the mosses spread everywhere and the trees take on menacing shapes. Here nature speaks the language of ancient fears and old superstitions. They are pictures which clearly demonstrate how difficult, if not impossible, it is for Germans to assimilate Italian thought. We can imagine that the Italians must have been just as surprised by Deutsch's parody of the *Judgment of Paris* (page 77) as present-day Catholics would be when confronted with a Nativity scene, recreated by Africans with a mixture of fetishism and Christianity.

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER

The case of Lucas Cranach the Elder is more puzzling than that of Deutsch, who was a sincere artist, or of Altdorfer on whom Cranach had a strong influence. He too oscillated between Venuses more Italian than in any German painting of the period and allegories newly resurrected from an inexhaustible Gothic tradition. But it seems incredible that the skilful portraitist of Johannes Cuspinian and his wife, the painter of the very clever *Crucifixion* in Munich, should be the same man as set bearded, stiffly gesturing officials on horseback with clowns' eyes which seem to come straight out of a Gothic stained-glass window or a Gothic picture, at the foot of his *Crucifixion* (page 79) in Vienna—the man who, when he attempts to describe in detail *Frederick the Wise at the Chase*, can forget all his lessons in perspective. Is it permissible to use the word clumsiness to describe these differences of style and thought? Certainly not, for Cranach has elsewhere given proof of what he could do. He simply did not have Dürer's faith in the new aesthetic. Although, while at the Court of Saxony, he shared Dürer's hope in the Lutheran movement, although he wished to be, like him, the portrait painter of the Reformation leaders, there the parallel ends. He believed in courtly art, that courtly art which might have been born in Prague had the imperial crown remained in the hands of the Kings of Bohemia, but which, in an entirely unexpected fashion, flourished only under that Maecenas of the Reformation, Frederick of Saxony. It was, in fact, at the Court of Luther's protector that small pictures of naked women, elegantly gesturing, scantily draped in veils so transparent that they merely enhance their charms, gained currency. It was at his Court that art became the object of commerce; the nudes of Cranach and Baldung Grien were bought in the same way as Altdorfer's landscapes. And Cranach had a prodigious output; he was the driving force of his studio, a man who had no time to worry whether he was applying the new theories well or otherwise. He painted and it happens that his painting has subtlety and exactness, the "polish" of mediaeval art—and like the latter it tells a story.

He set an extraordinary example at a period when Dürer was indulging in his learned pastimes, in codified theories, in a complicated system of measurements which would not only give the picture beauty but yield the key to the universe. In Cranach's case, the Renaissance is taken as an opportunity for piquant variations on mythology, and although the names happen to be Greek, the plot comes from the very depth of the forests in which the Germanic tribes had camped.

HANS HOLBEIN

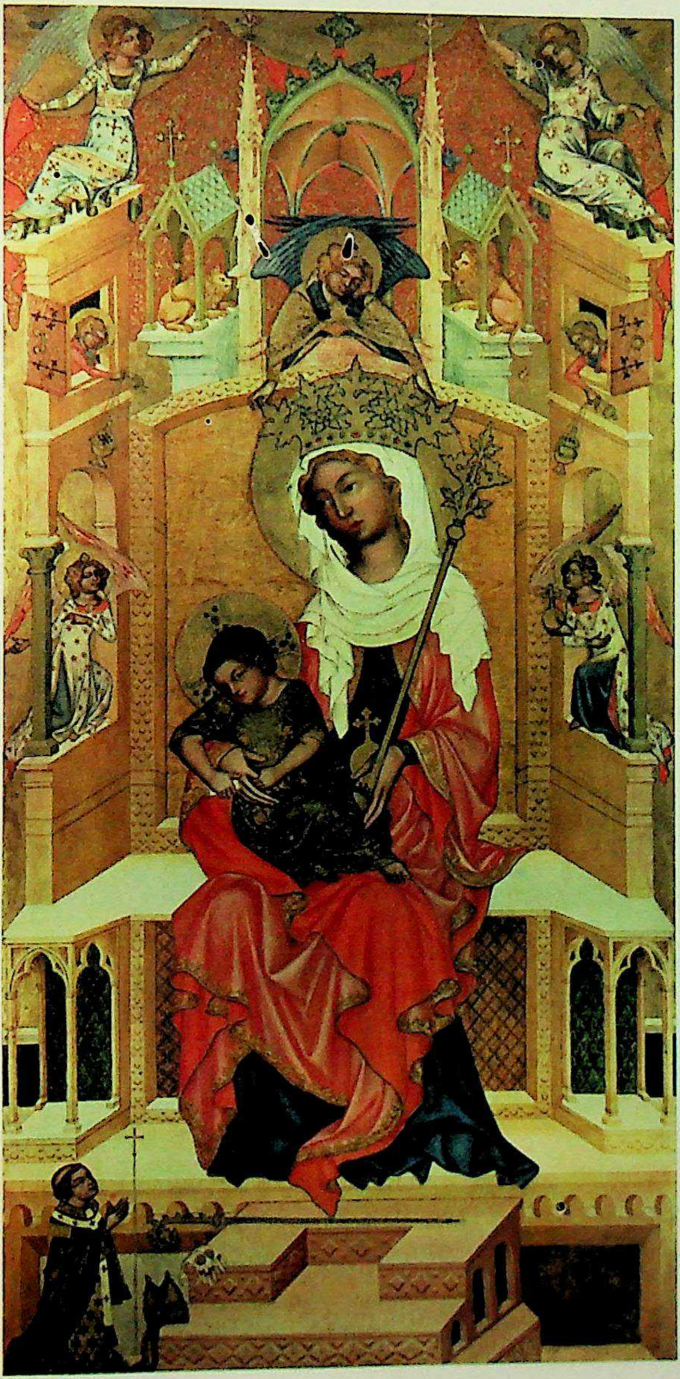
Hans Holbein does not present us such a varied and fascinating *oeuvre* as does Cranach, whose work springs from contradictions. Holbein's gallery of portraits strikes us as a series of miracles of accuracy. After so many artists, whose inner struggles are so apparent, whom we can so easily place in their troubled age, Holbein seems somewhat cold—a great and prodigious master of composition, a dissector of men, but where is that cry of anguish we hear so often from his contemporaries? With him there is no break in style. From the beginning to end of his career, it is perfection itself. Holbein does not flaunt his scientific skill, he masters and assimilates it completely. Together with Dürer, he seems the only painter to bring German art in harmony with international trends. In so doing, he also deprived it of its peculiar flavour. One of his pictures, the *Artist's Family* (page 90), provides us with the key to his other portraits. Confronted with this extraordinarily sad painting of his own family, we can well understand why Holbein could only set his personal stamp on official portraits by certain extremely discreet touches. The despair he put into his wife's face, the fear of life in the eyes of his children, is expressed with the utmost restraint. His art does not shout, it suggests. Its impact is all the more powerful. Viewed thus, his portraits of humanists and his royal likenesses have much to teach us. His engravings, and in particular the famous *Dance of Death*, display the same characteristics. For the violent line of his contemporaries he substitutes a much more flexible, more nobly elaborate style—a style which does not prevent astonishing realism. For the portraitist of the great of this world, the Court painter employed on diplomatic tasks, did not cease to be a fierce satirist. Like Dürer, he shows it only in his illustrations, whereas allegories provide Cranach or Baldung Grien with an opportunity to strike a critical note in their paintings. But is not social satire a mediaeval tradition? In its desire to reach the sphere of pure meditation, of transcendental plastic art, had painting not perhaps lost that power of invective which was so freely expressed on cathedral porches, in the poems of the Meistersingers, in the dances of death, where King and Pope cut a more shameful figure than the serf, in engravings which denounced the lubricity of the monks and the avarice of the wealthy and explained to the illiterate Ferdank's saying: "No one in Rome has ever seen the net St. Peter caught the fish with; the nets of the Romans are for catching gold and silver."

When he saw that his work had not fulfilled its intended purpose—which was to preach—Dürer could not refrain from writing around the figures of the saints he presented to the Town Council of Nuremberg that men should hearken only to the word of God, without omission or addition.

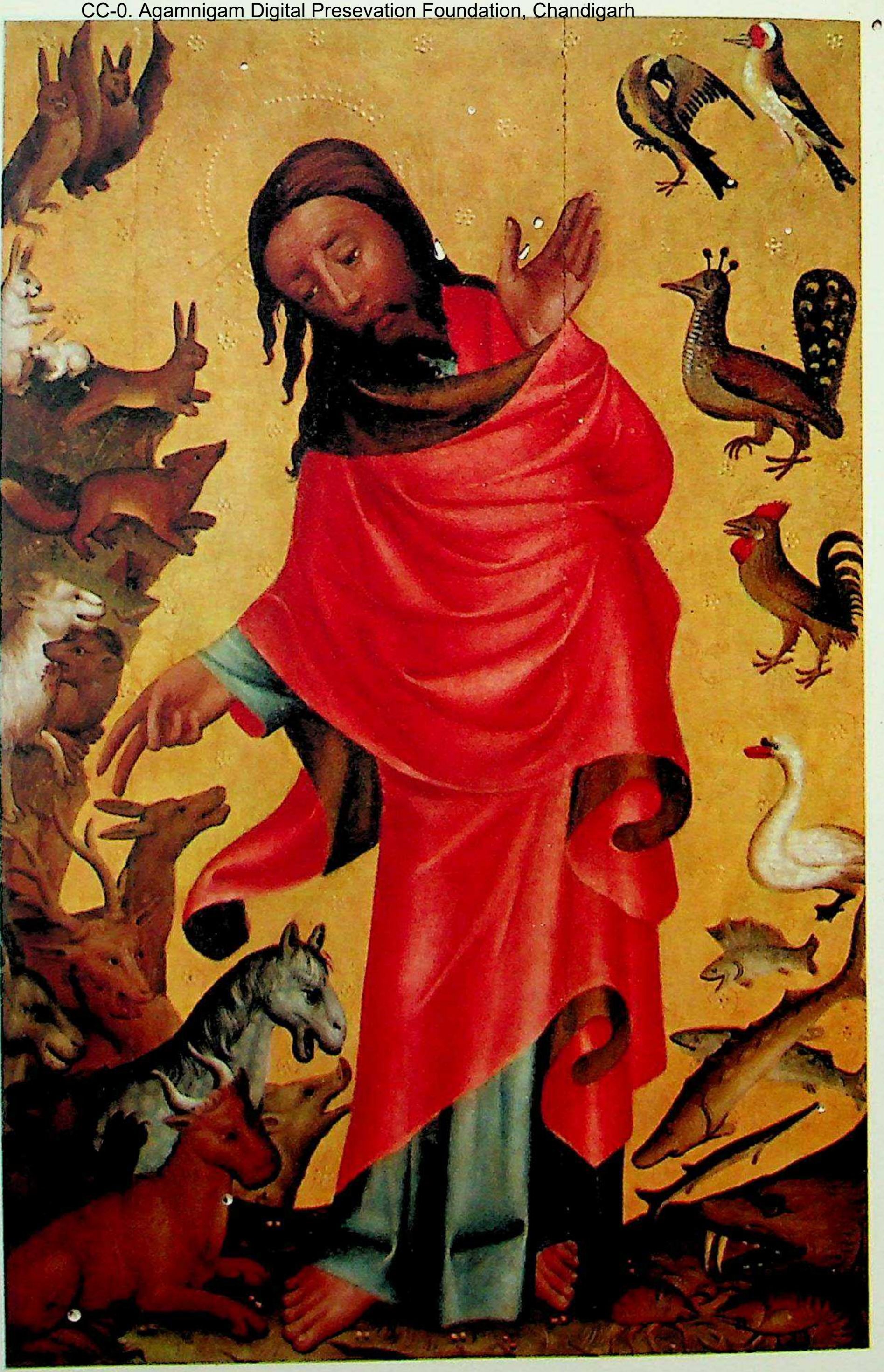
German painting was to die because it tried too hard to participate in the events of its time. In Germany, the new manner of painting was undoubtedly incompatible with the morality it considered it its duty to preach without respite. And the desire for a withdrawal into itself was clearly not strong enough to prevent the Italian fashion from triumphing after all and making the survival of Gothic thought, which had produced so many miracles, seem outmoded. The country too was splitting up; the lovers of art were becoming impoverished. Yet, we cannot help looking for more sensational reasons for the death of German painting. Could a generation so rich in talent really remain without descendants? All that the historians, the research students and the scholars who have ransacked the store-rooms of the museums, have been able to find in the whole 17th century, is Adam Elsheimer, one of the pioneers of the luminist school, the master of Rembrandt's masters. He lived in Rome.

PLATES

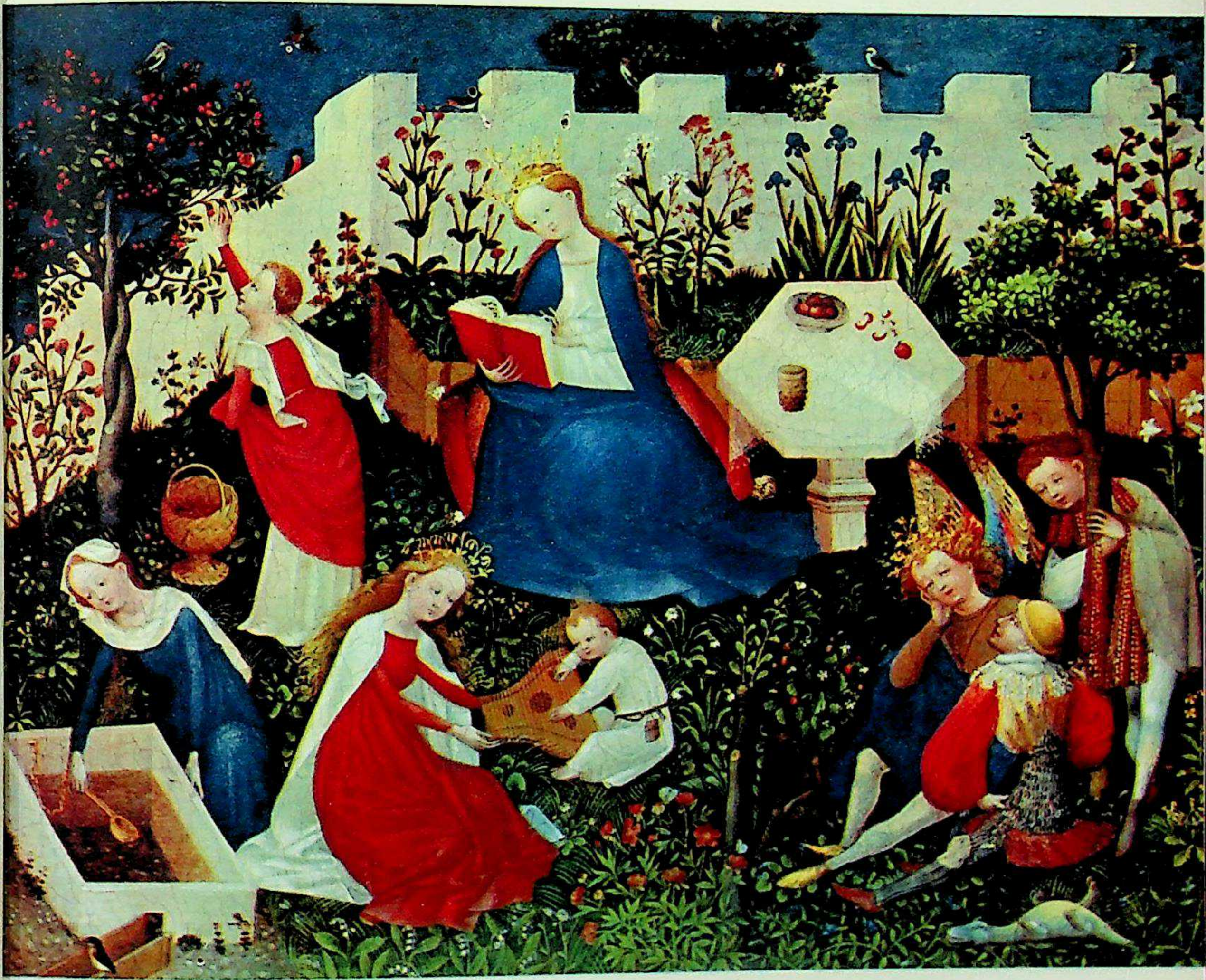
State Museum,
LUCKNOW.



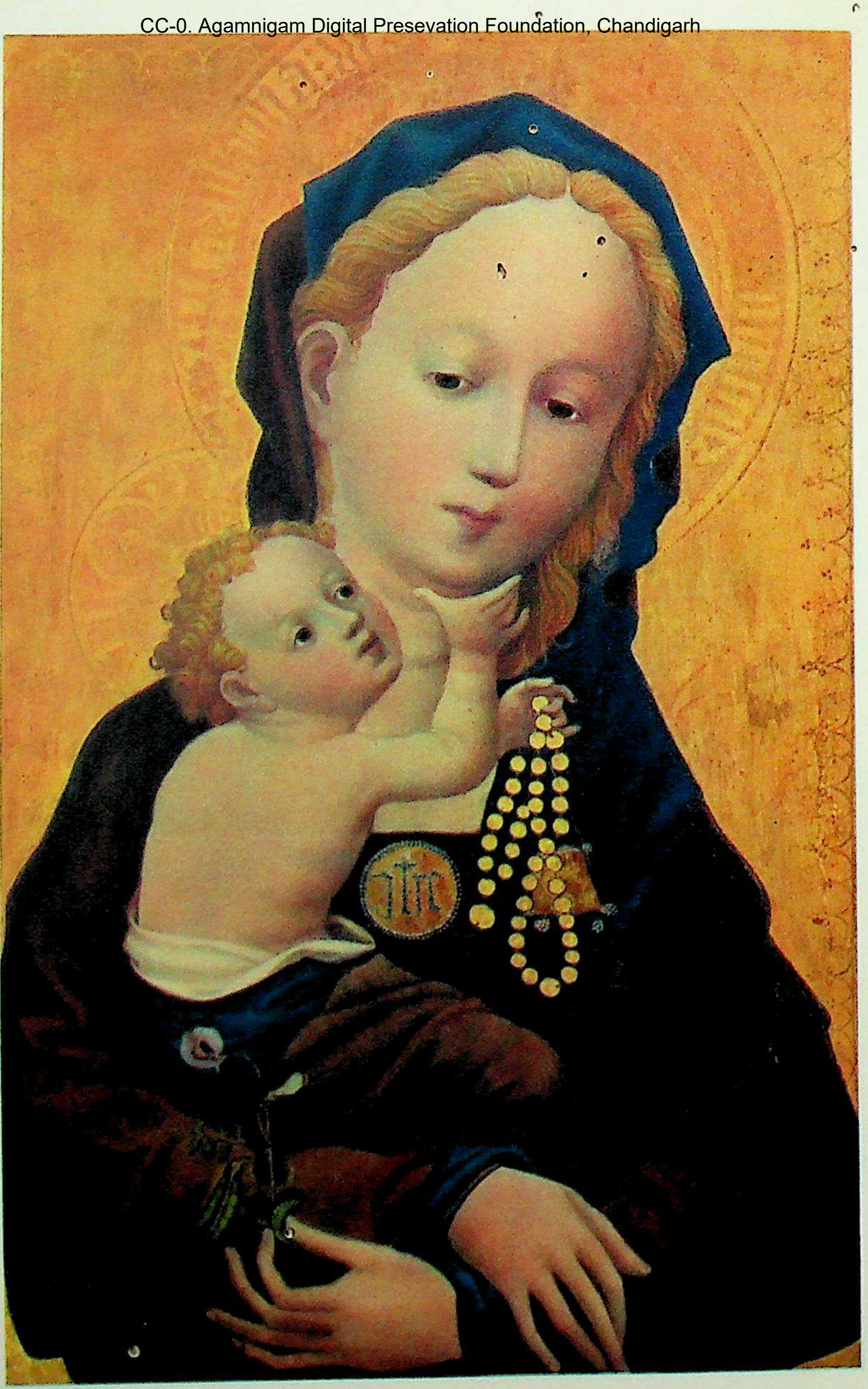
BOHEMIAN MASTER
Glatz Madonna c. 1350
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem



MASTER BERTRAM
GOD CREATING THE ANIMALS c. 1380
Kunsthalle, Hamburg



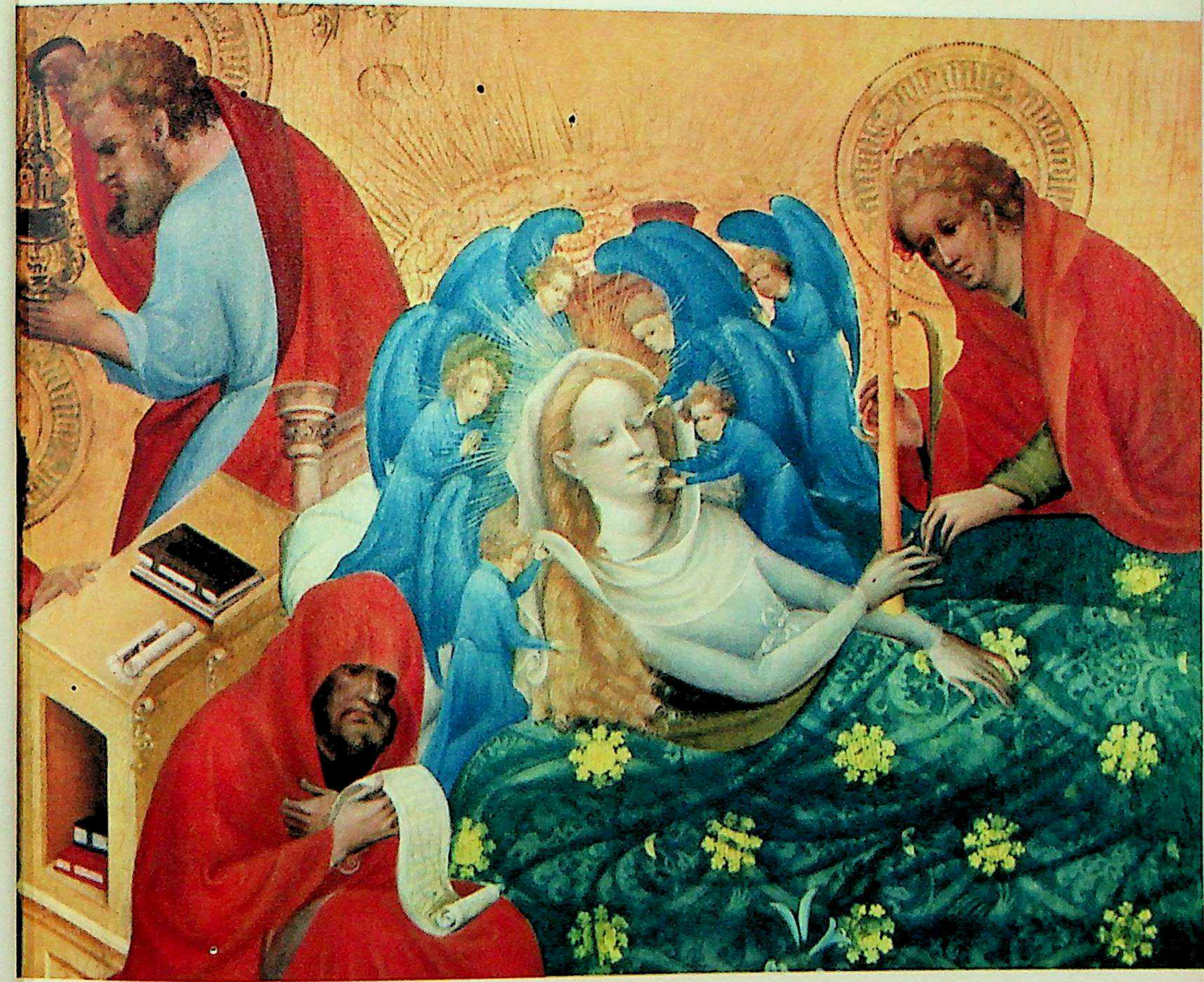
MASTER OF THE UPPER RHINE
Paradise Garden c. 1420
Städel Institute, Frankfurt



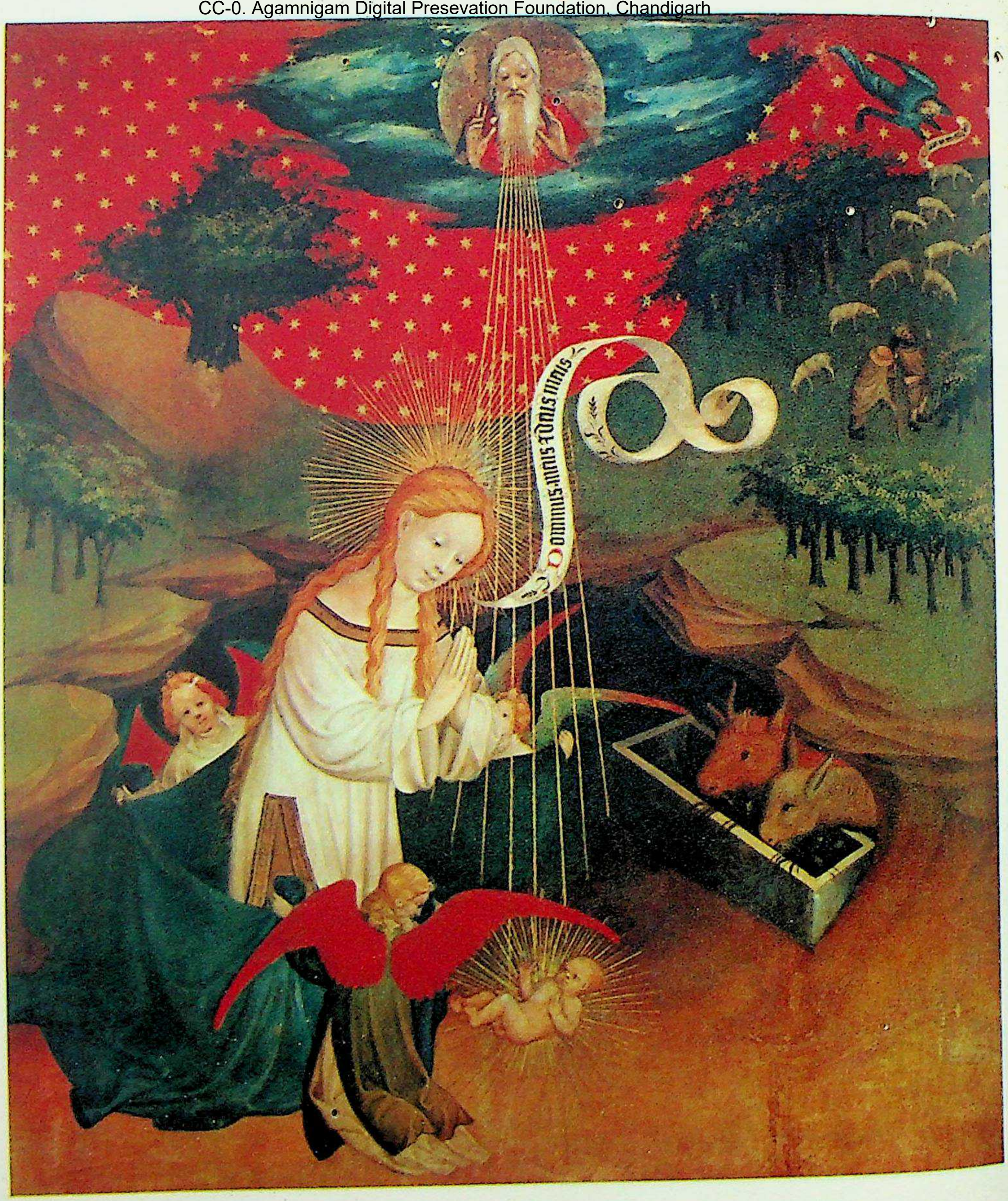
COLOGNE MASTER

MADONNA WITH THE VETCH PLANT c. 1410

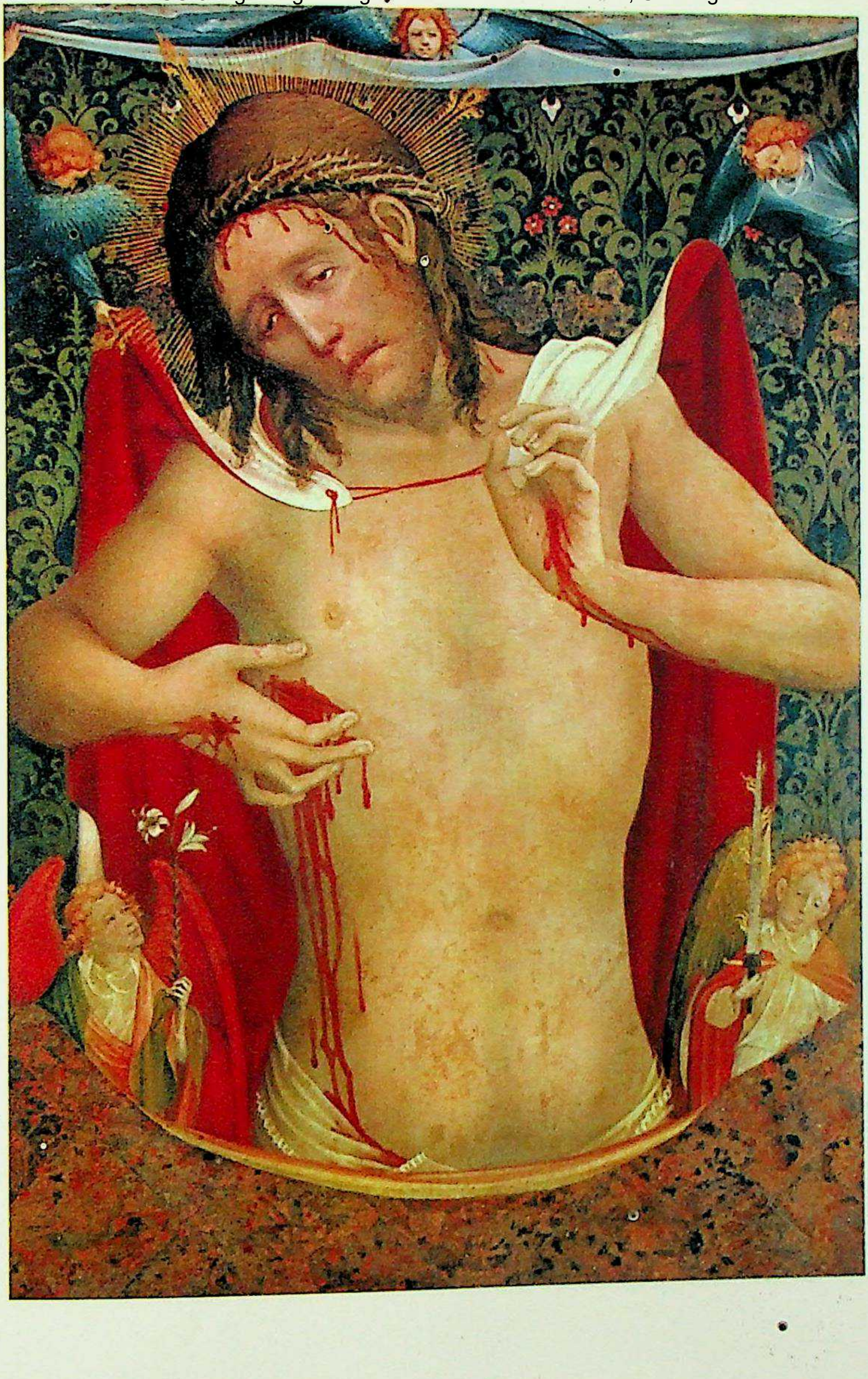
Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne



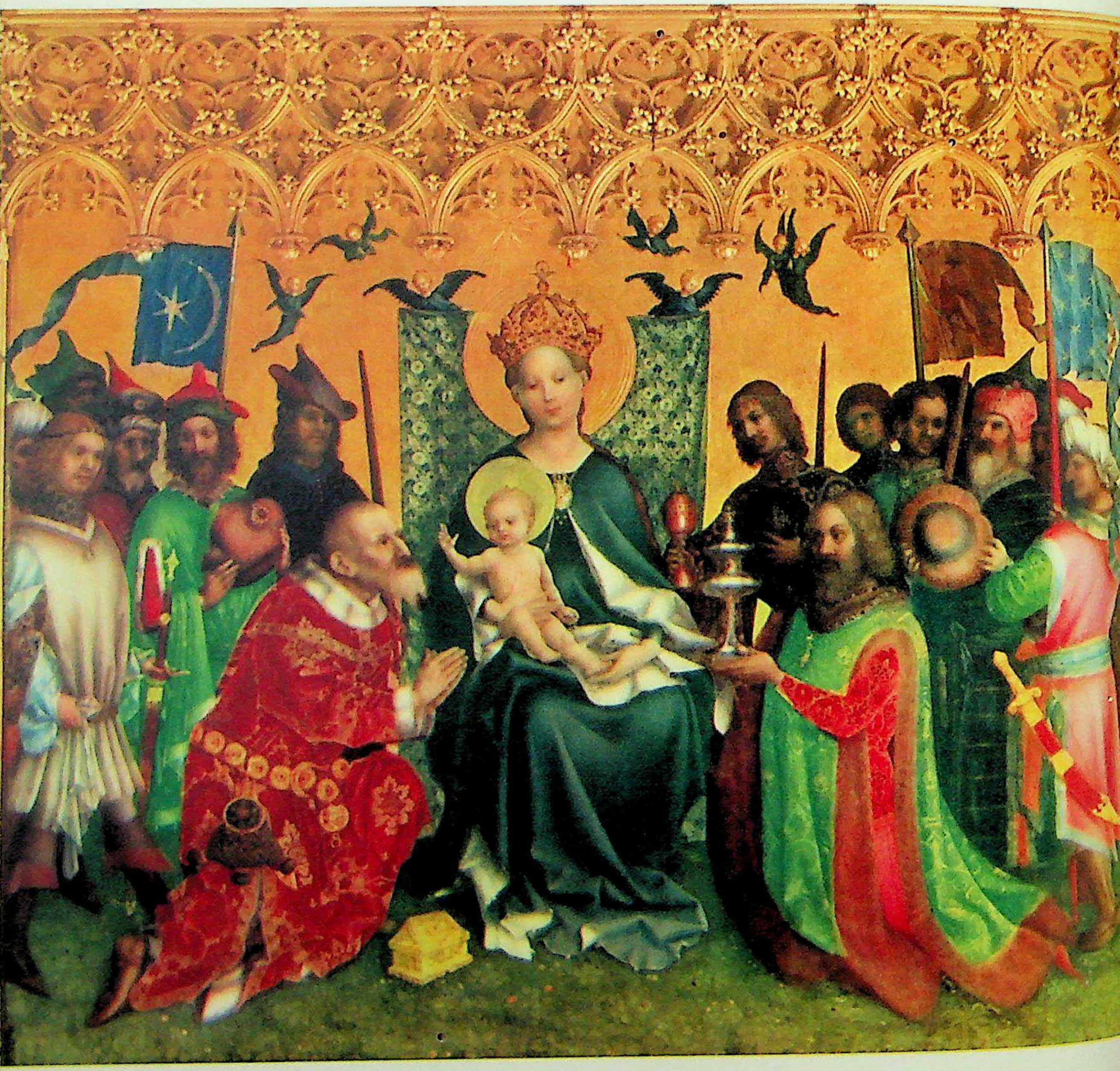
KONRAD VON SOEST
DEATH OF THE VIRGIN c. 1420
St. Mary's Church, Dortmund



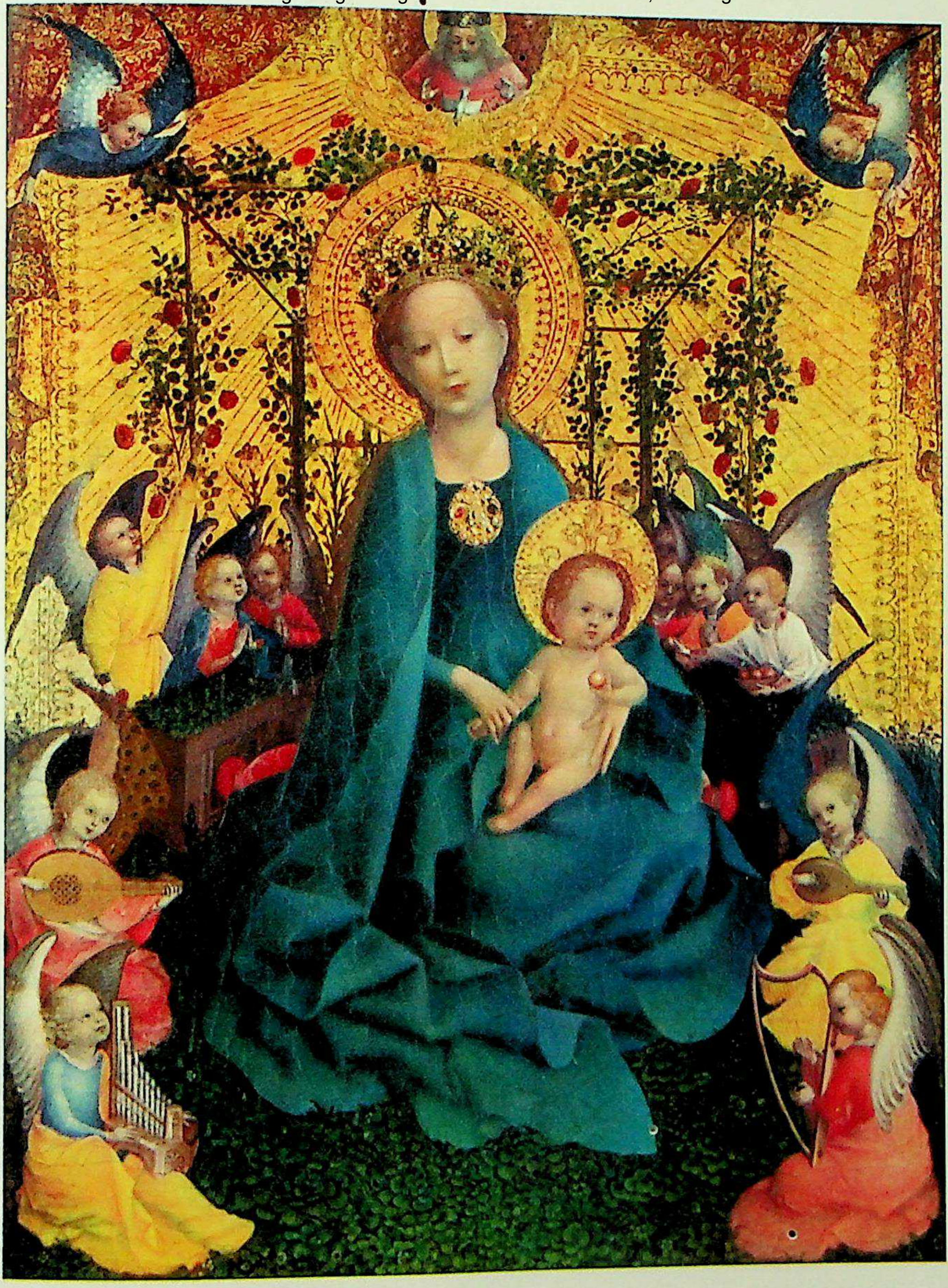
MASTER FRANCKE
NATIVITY C. 1425
Kunsthalle, Hamburg



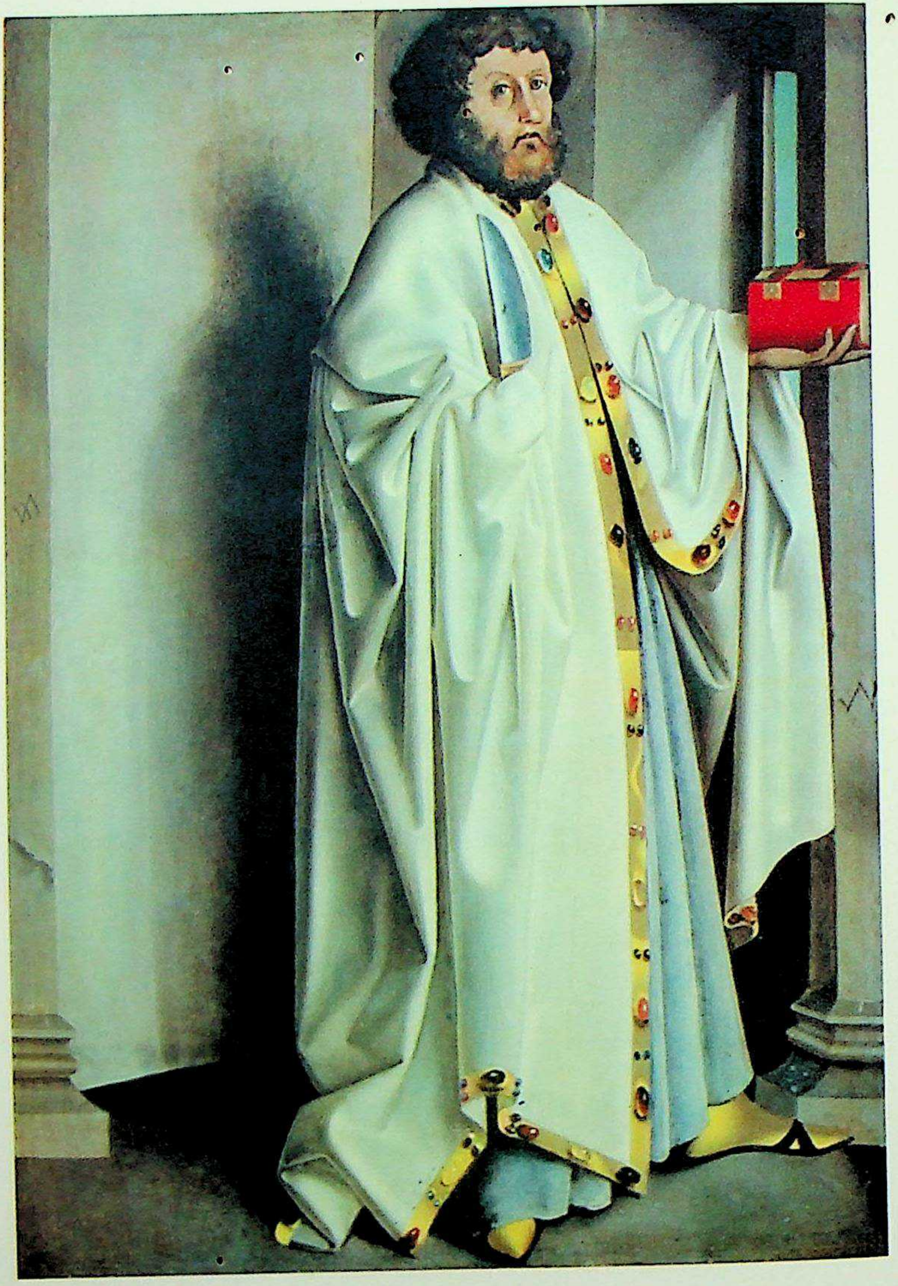
MASTER FRANCKE
Man of Sorrows c. 1430
Kunsthalle, Hamburg



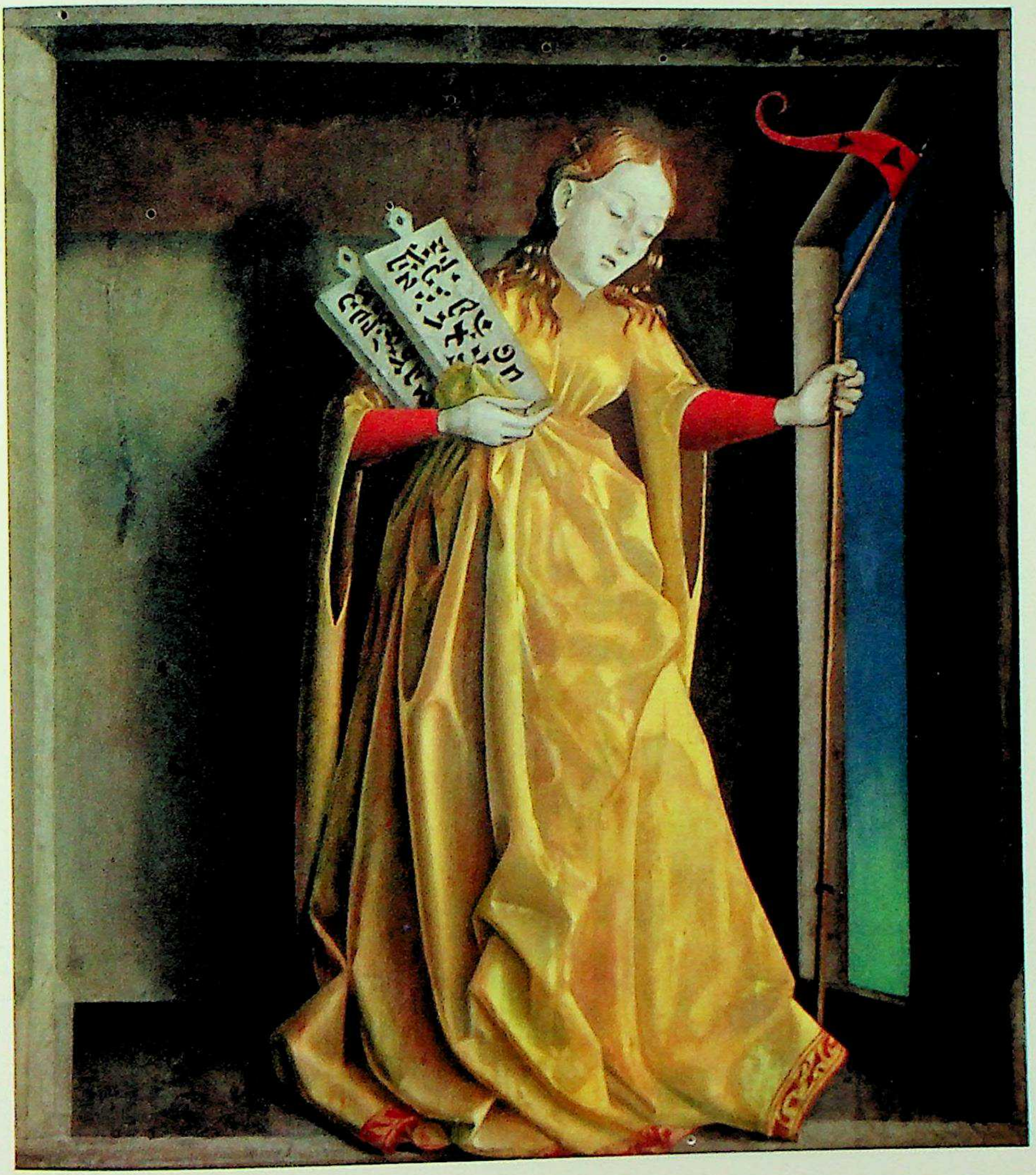
STEFAN LOCHNER
Adoration of the Magi c. 1440
Cologne Cathedral



STEFAN LOCHNER
Virgin of the Rose Garden c. 1440
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne



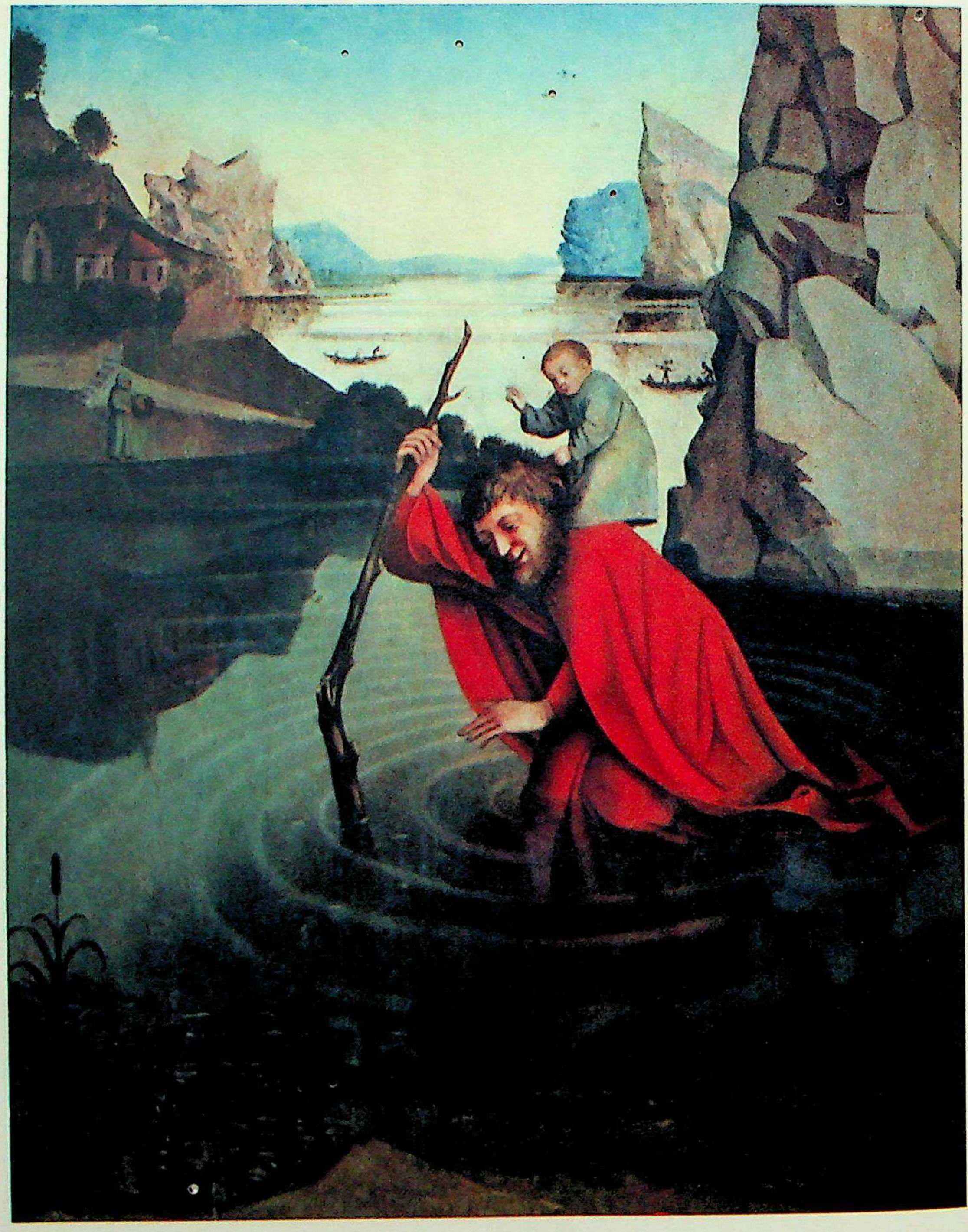
KONRAD WITZ
St. Bartholomew c. 1435
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Basle



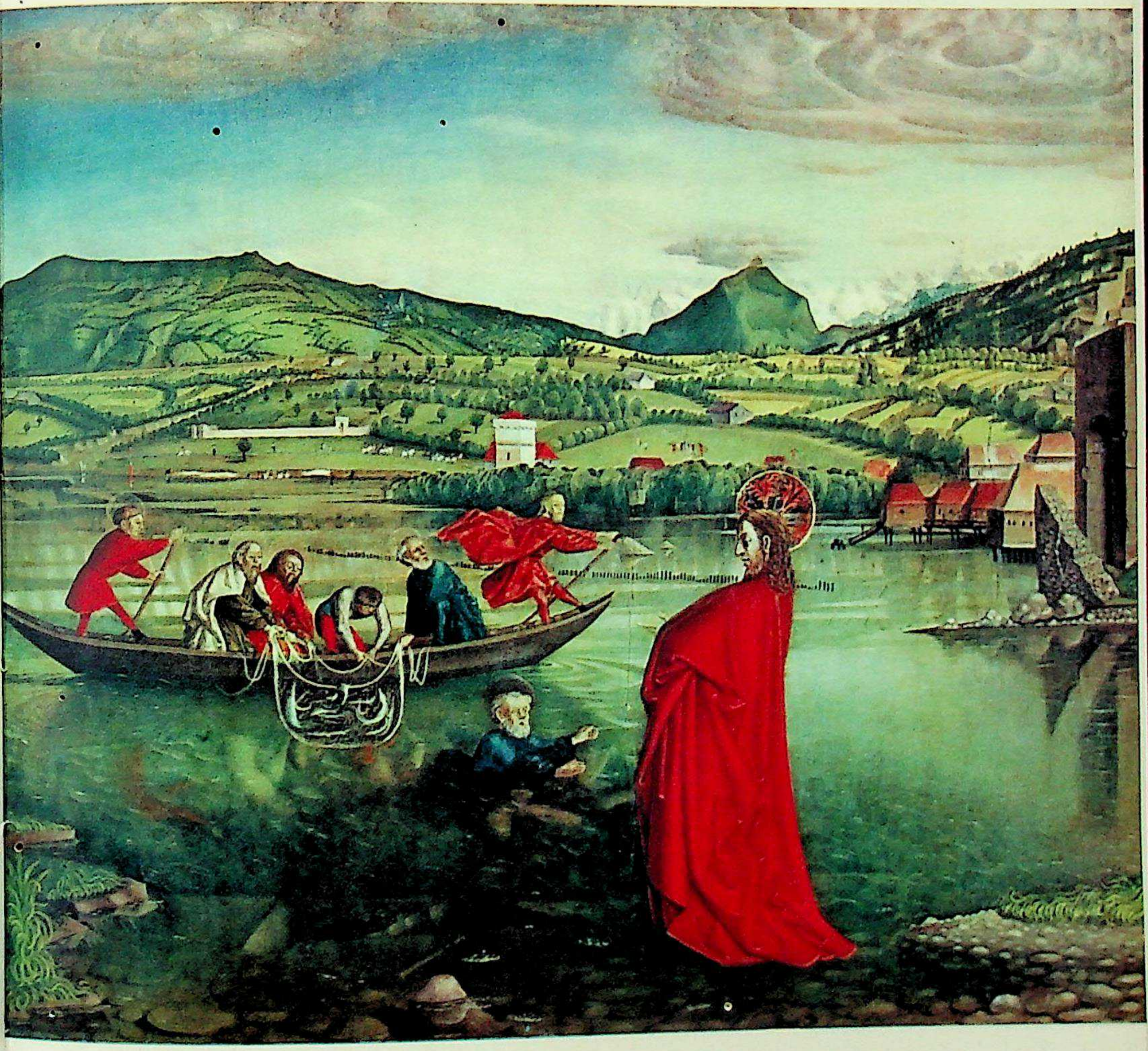
KONRAD WITZ

SYNAGOGUE c. 1435

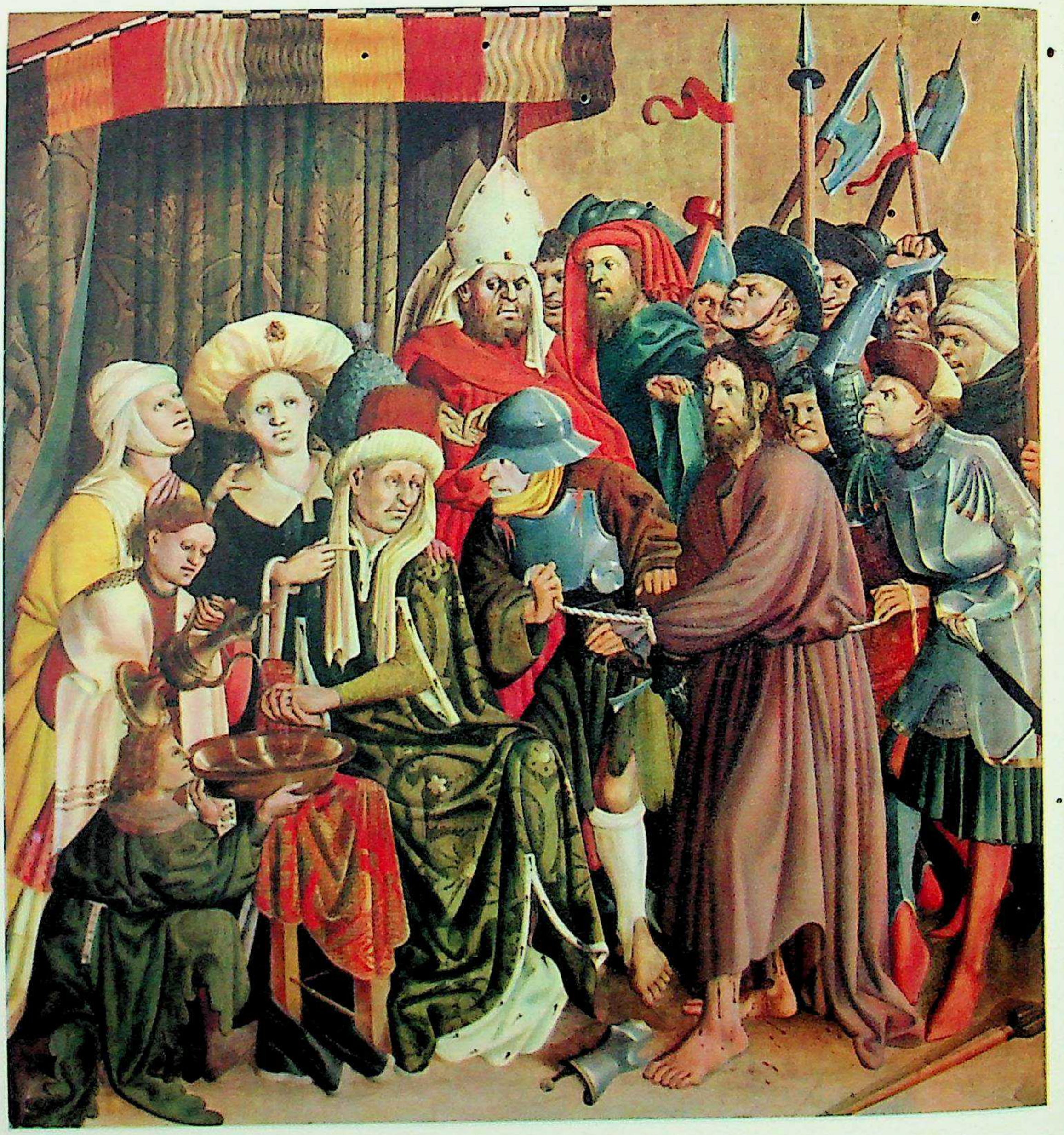
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Basle



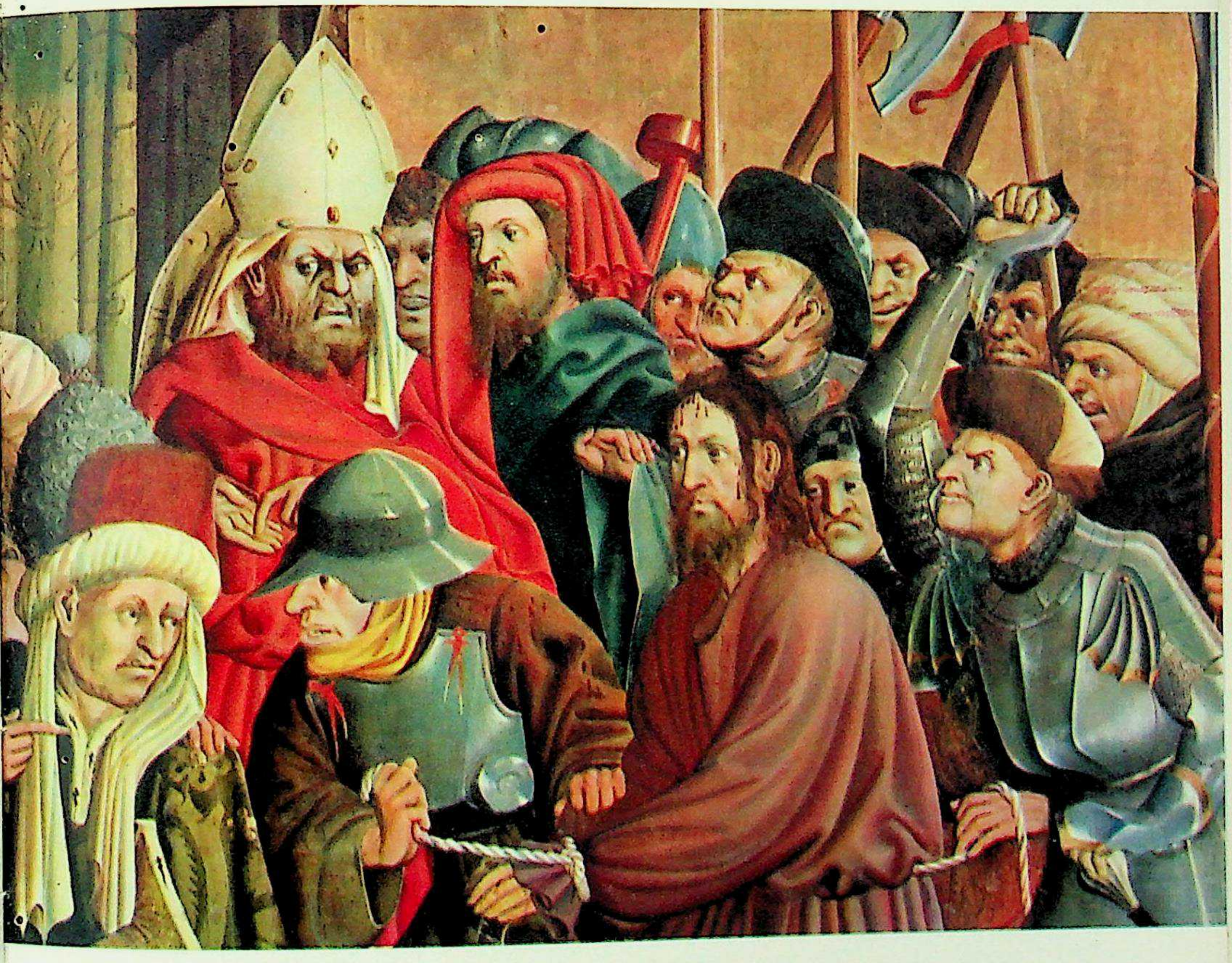
KONRAD WITZ
St. Christopher c. 1435
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Basle



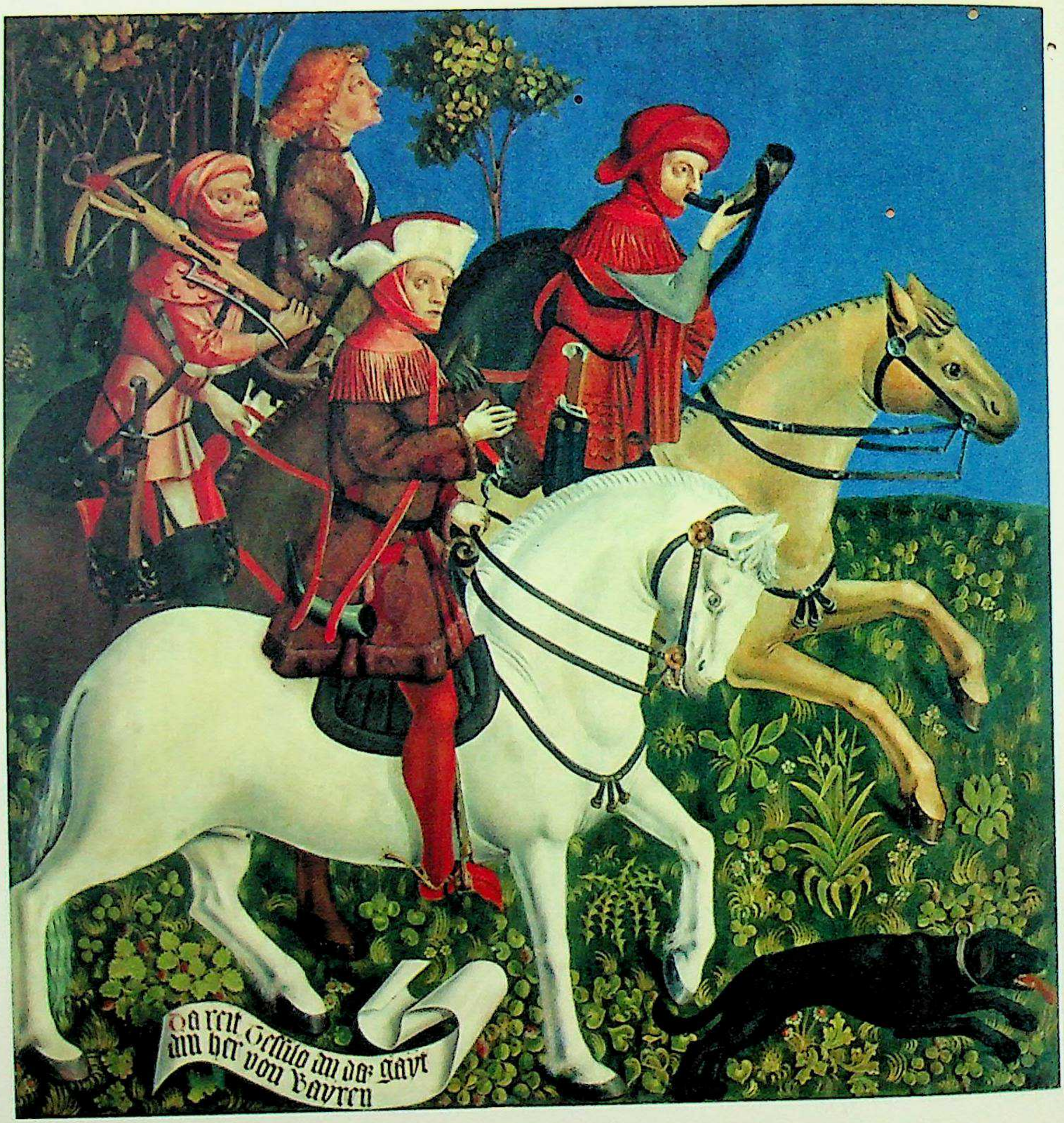
KONRAD WITZ
DRAUGHT OF FISHES 1444
Archaeological Museum, Geneva



HANS MULTSCHER
Christ before Pilate 1437
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem



HANS MULTSCHER
CHRIST BEFORE PILATE DETAIL
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem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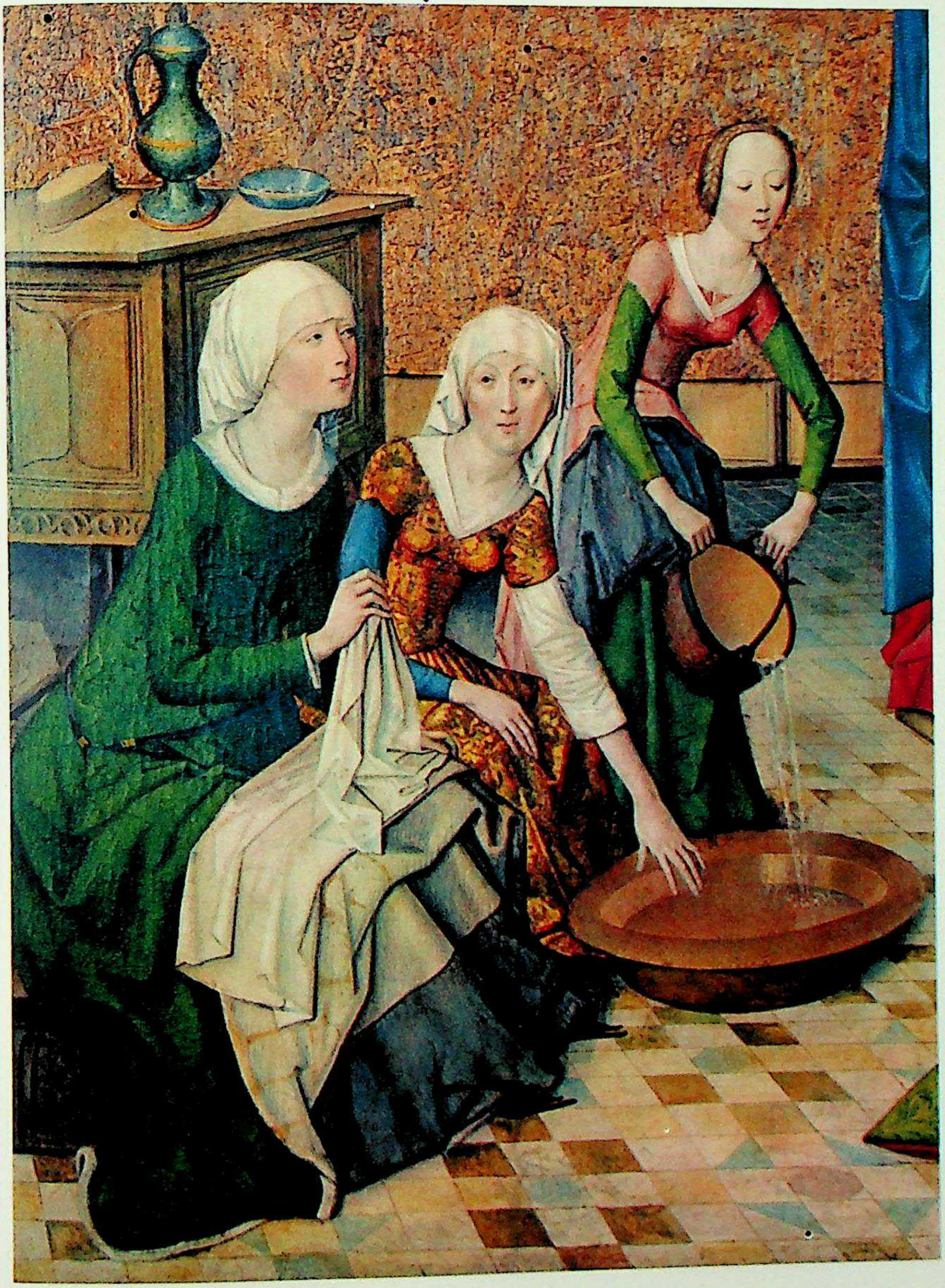
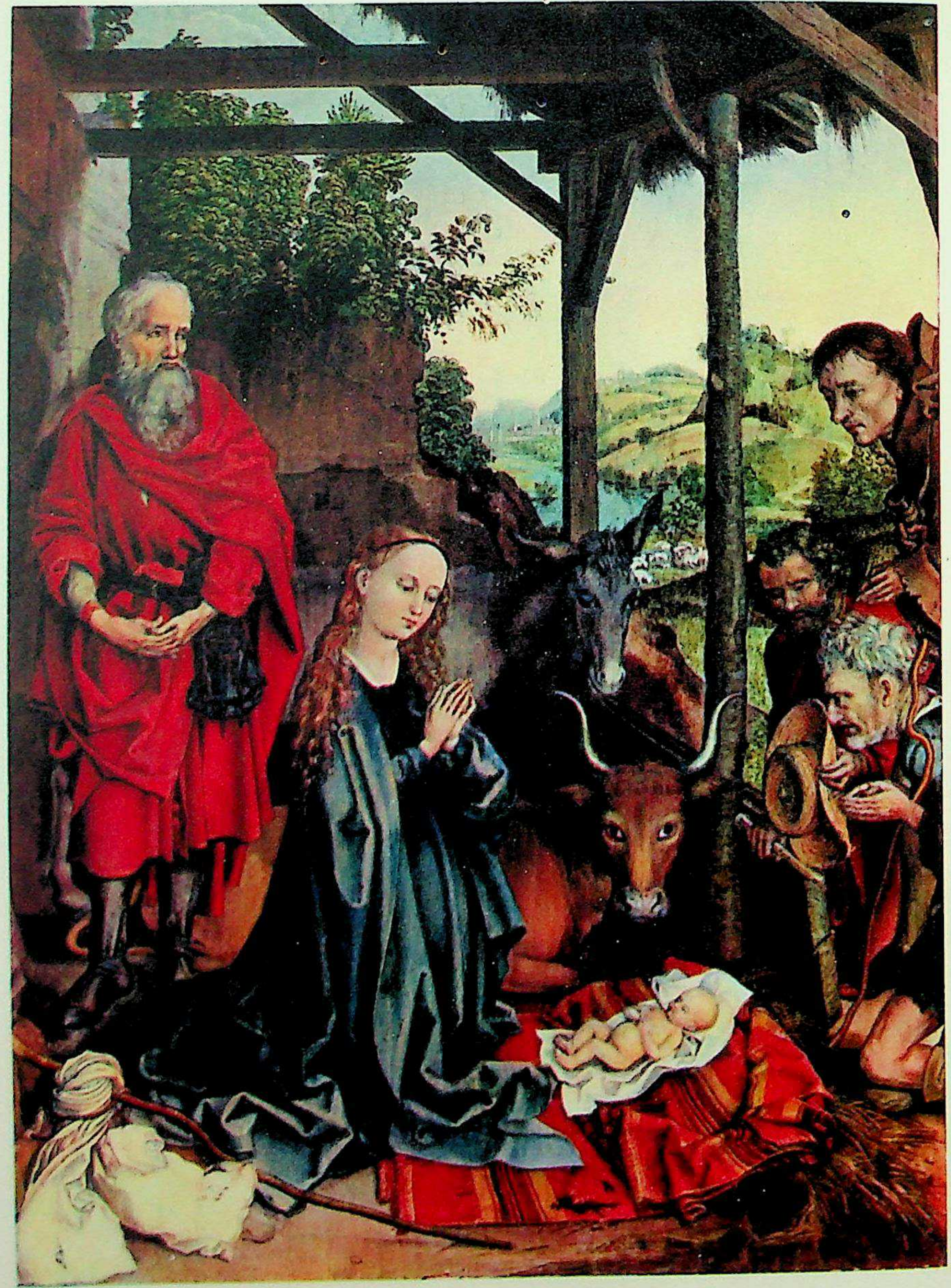
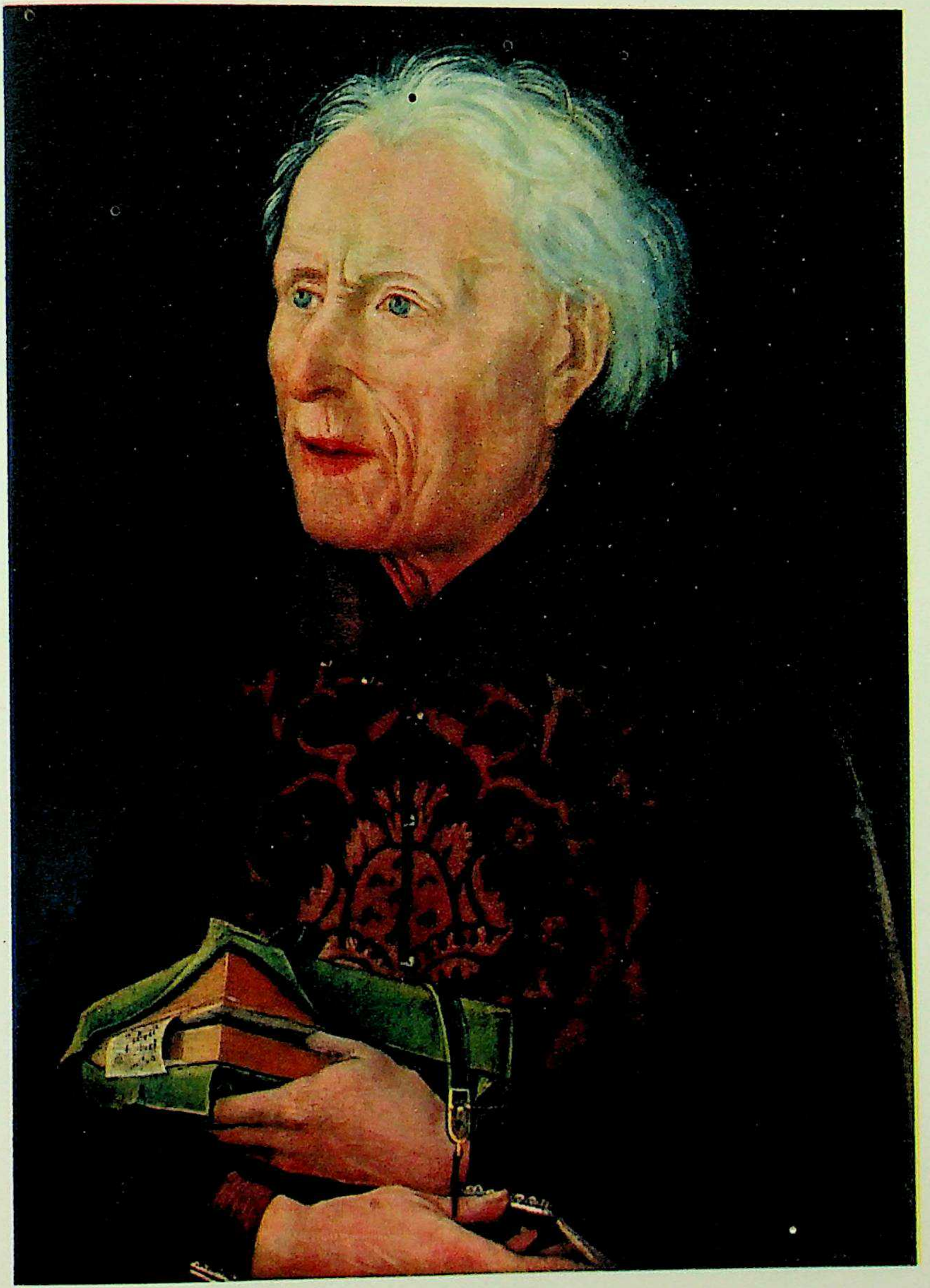
MASTER OF THE POLLING ALTAR
Hunt of Duke Tassilo (Detail) 1444
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



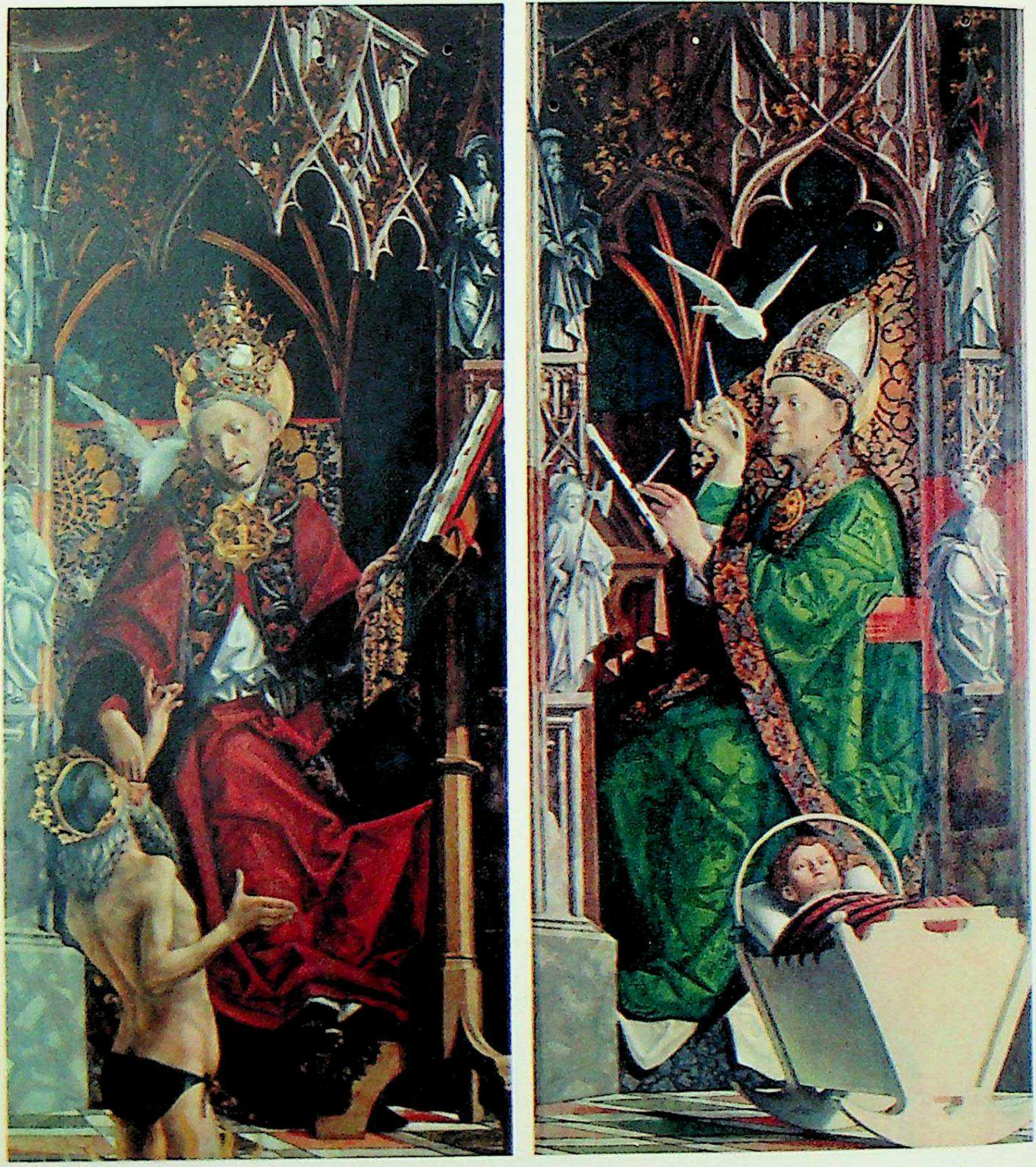
MASTER OF THE LIFE OF MARY
Nativity of the Virgin (Detail) c. 1470
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



MARTIN SCHONGAUER
NATIVITY
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem

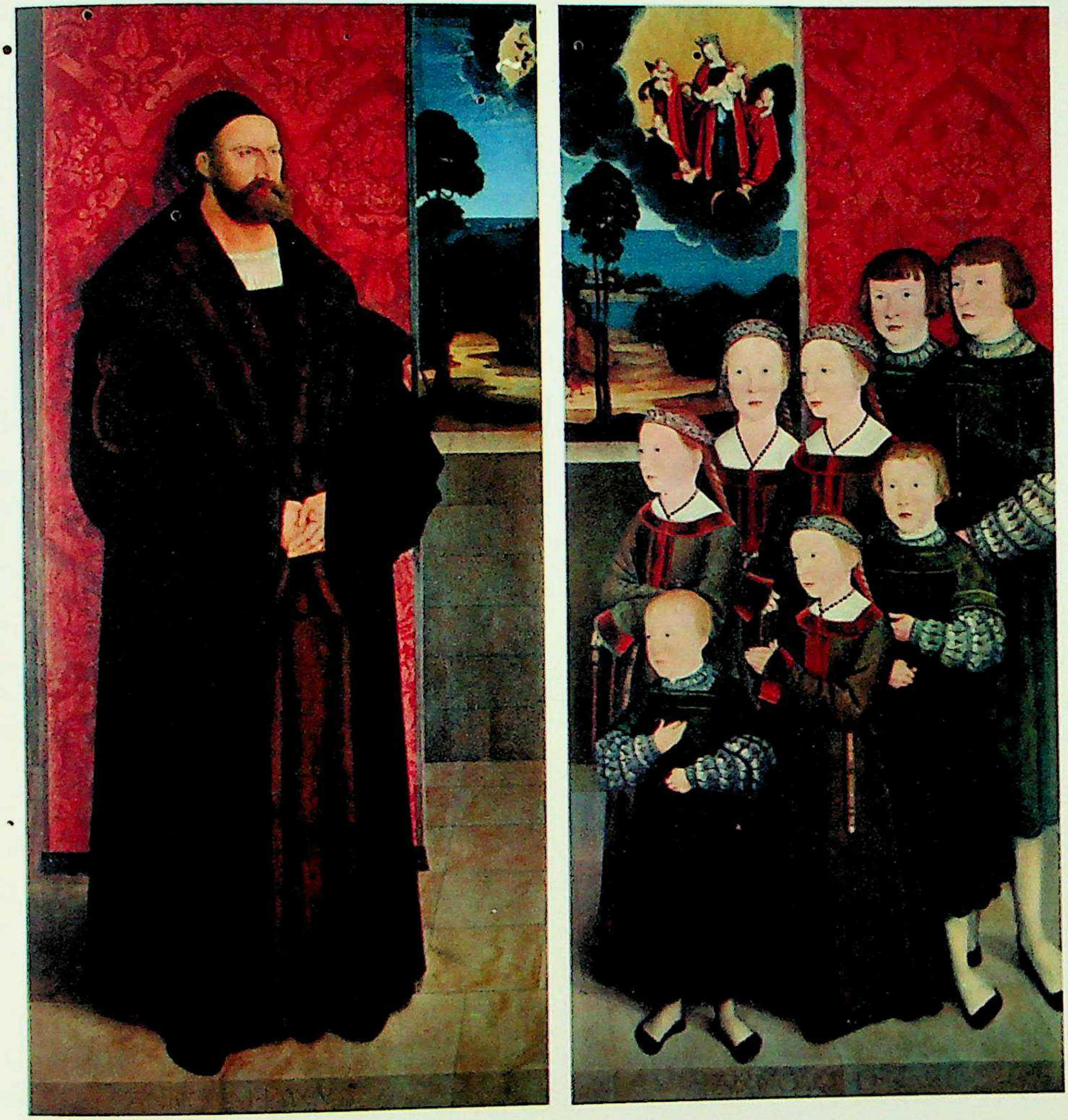


HANS PLEYDENWURFF
PORTRAIT OF COUNT GEORG VON LOEWENSTEIN c. 1457
Germanisches Museum, Nuremberg

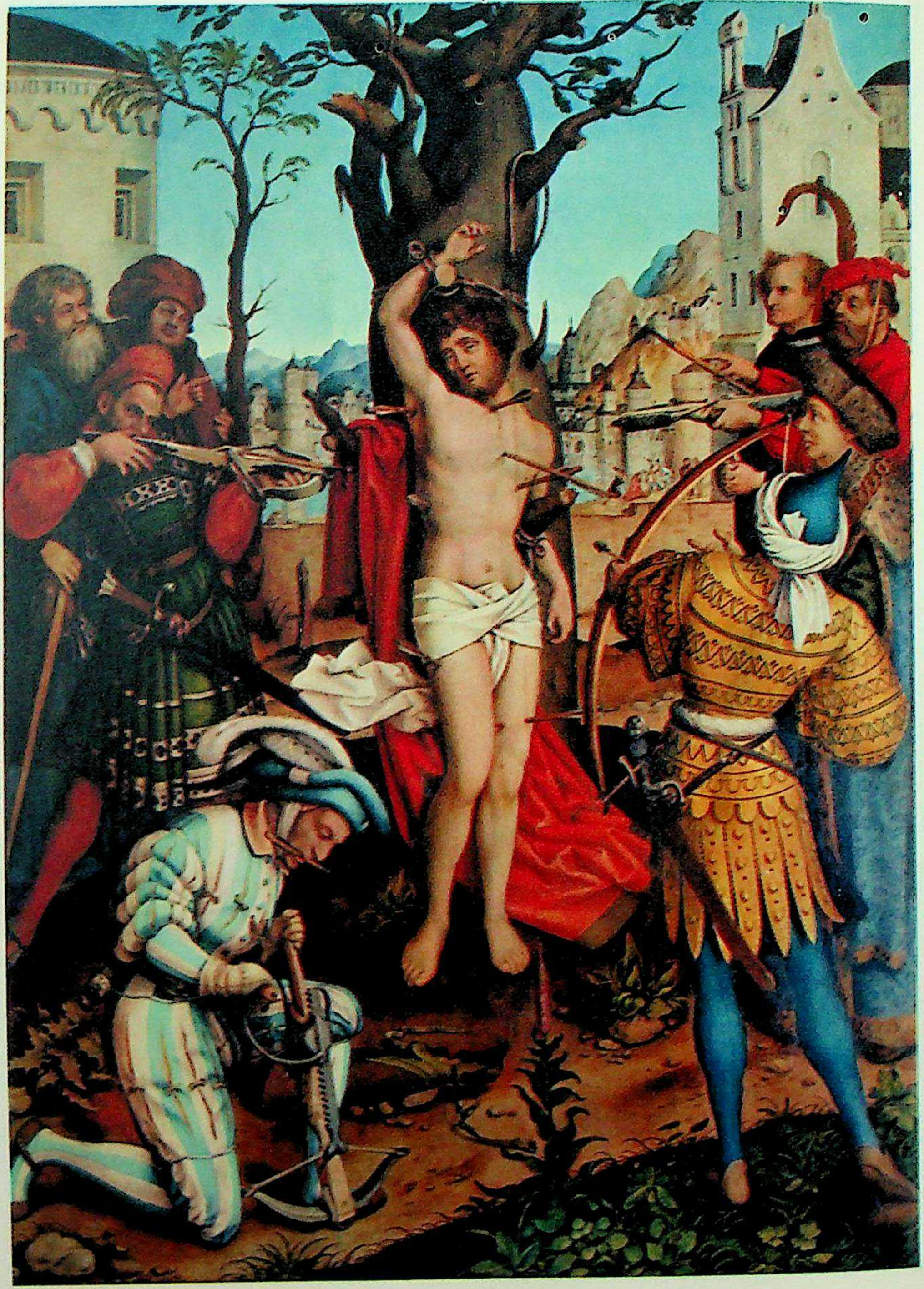


MICHAEL PACHER
Altar-piece of the Fathers of the Church c. 1483
Left: St. Gregory; right: St. Ambrose
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

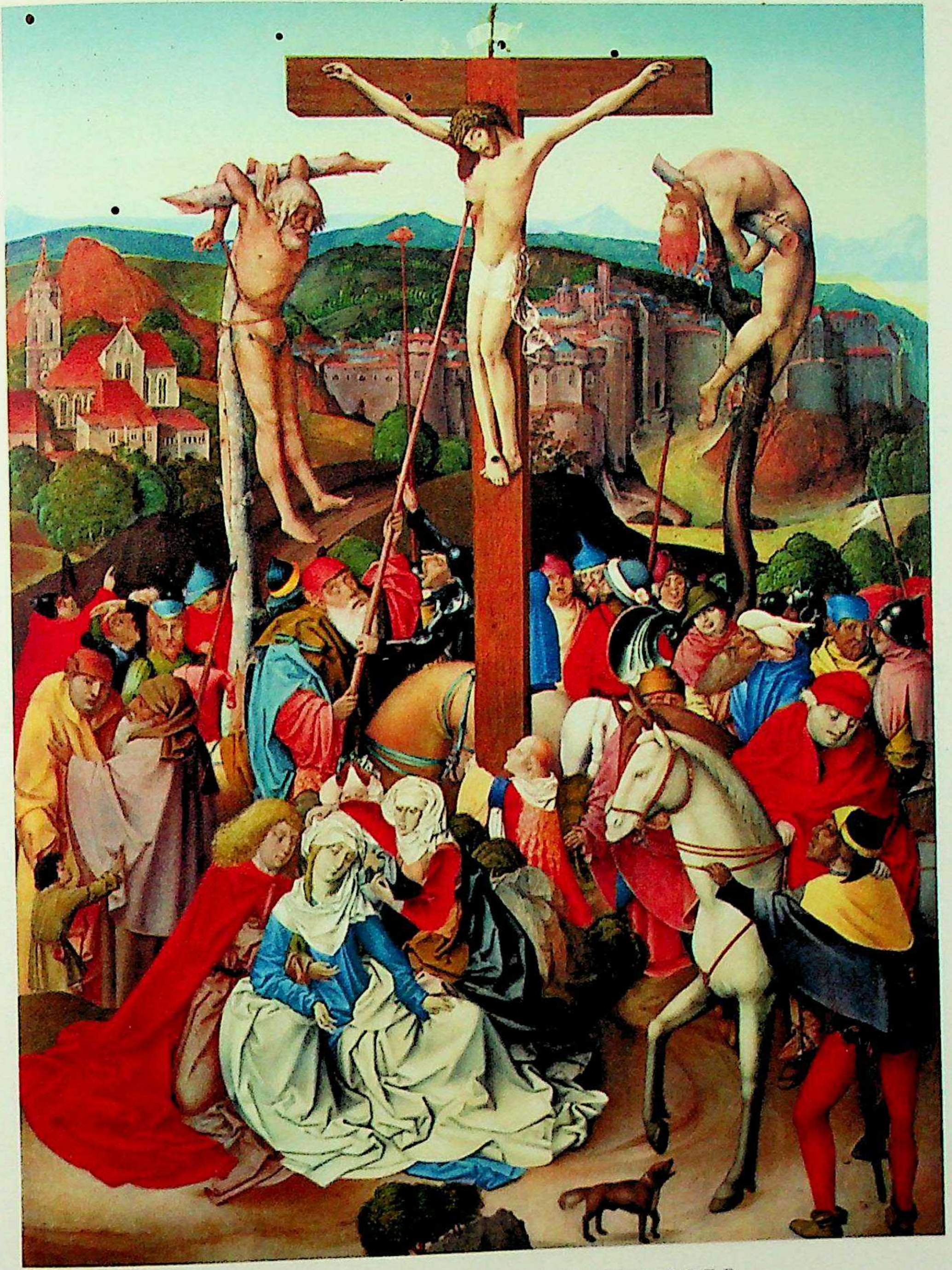
State Museum,
LUCKNOW.



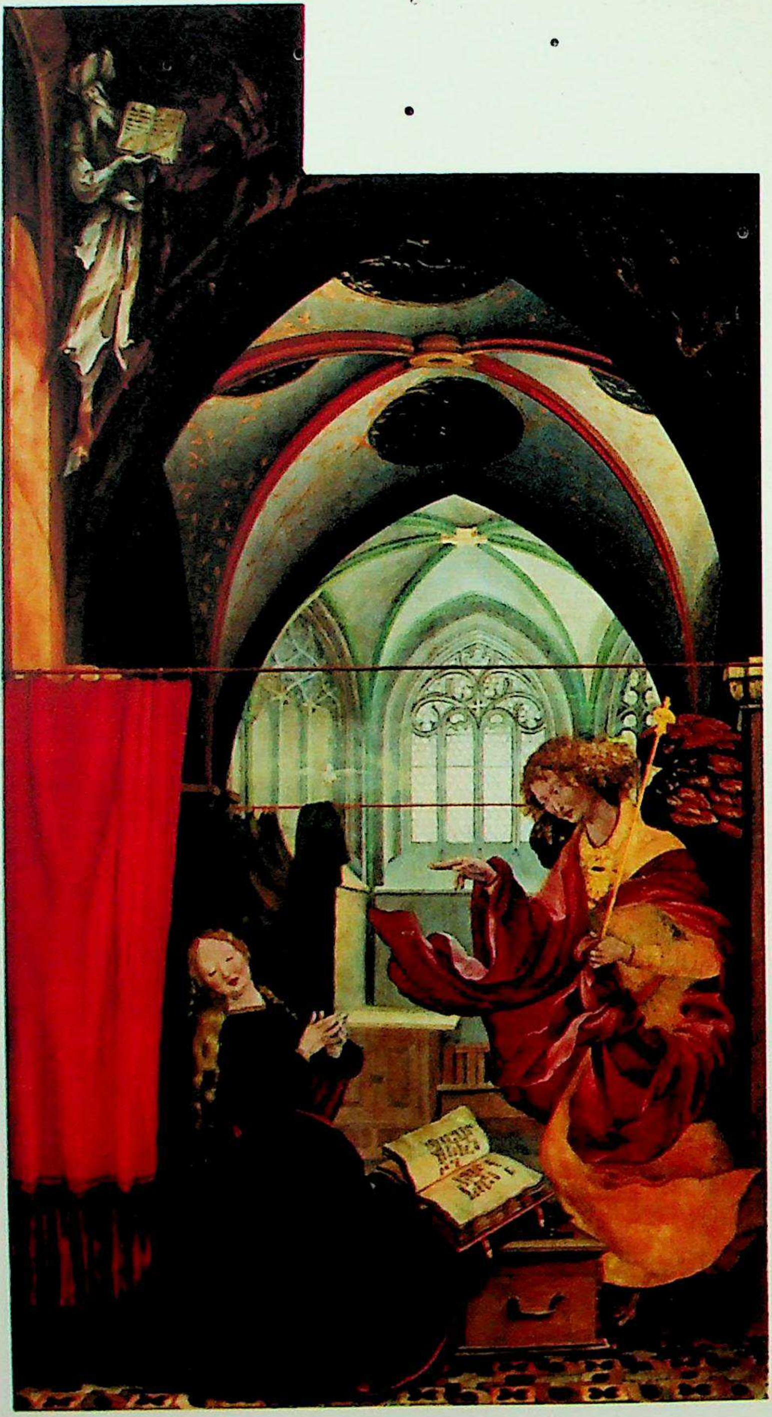
BERNARD STRIGEL
Portrait of Conrad Rehlinger the Elder 1517
The Children of Conrad Rehlinger 1517
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



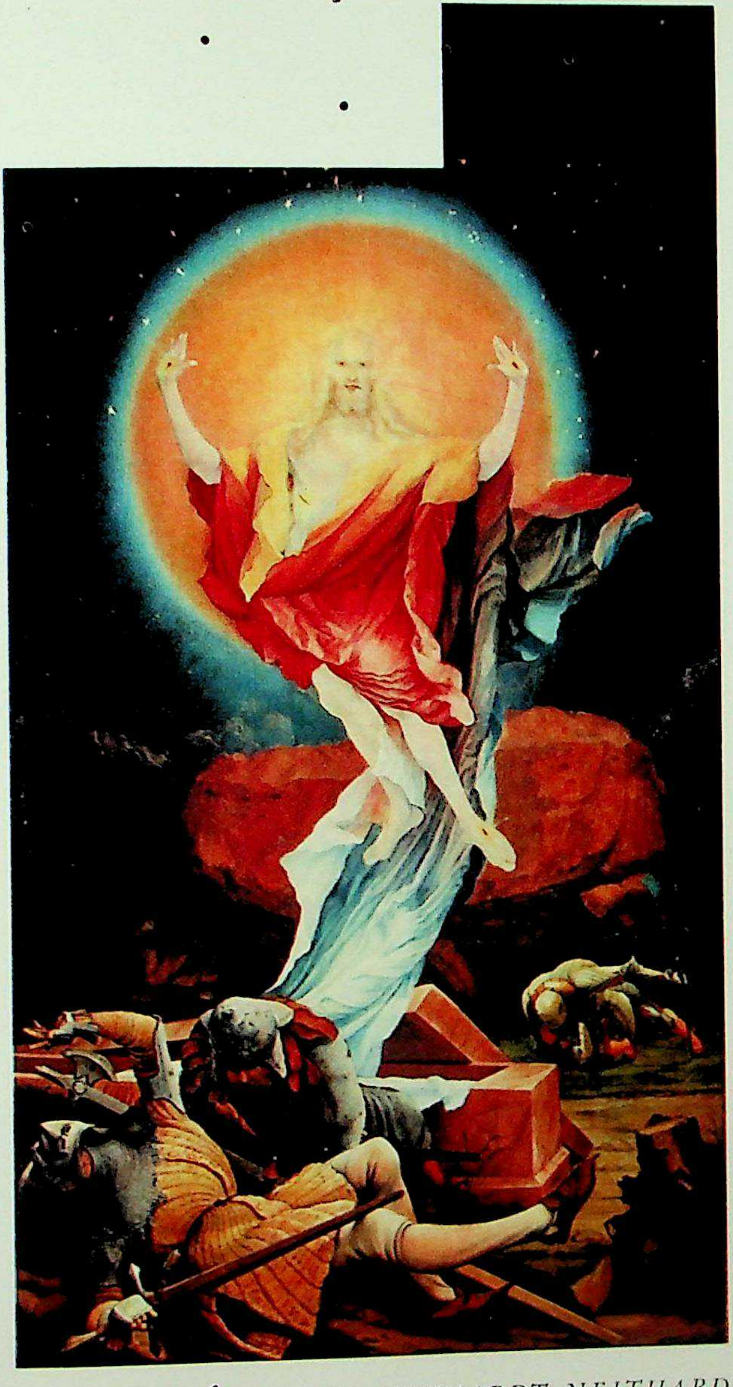
HANS HOLBEIN, THE ELDER
MARTYRDOM OF ST. SEBASTIAN 1516
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



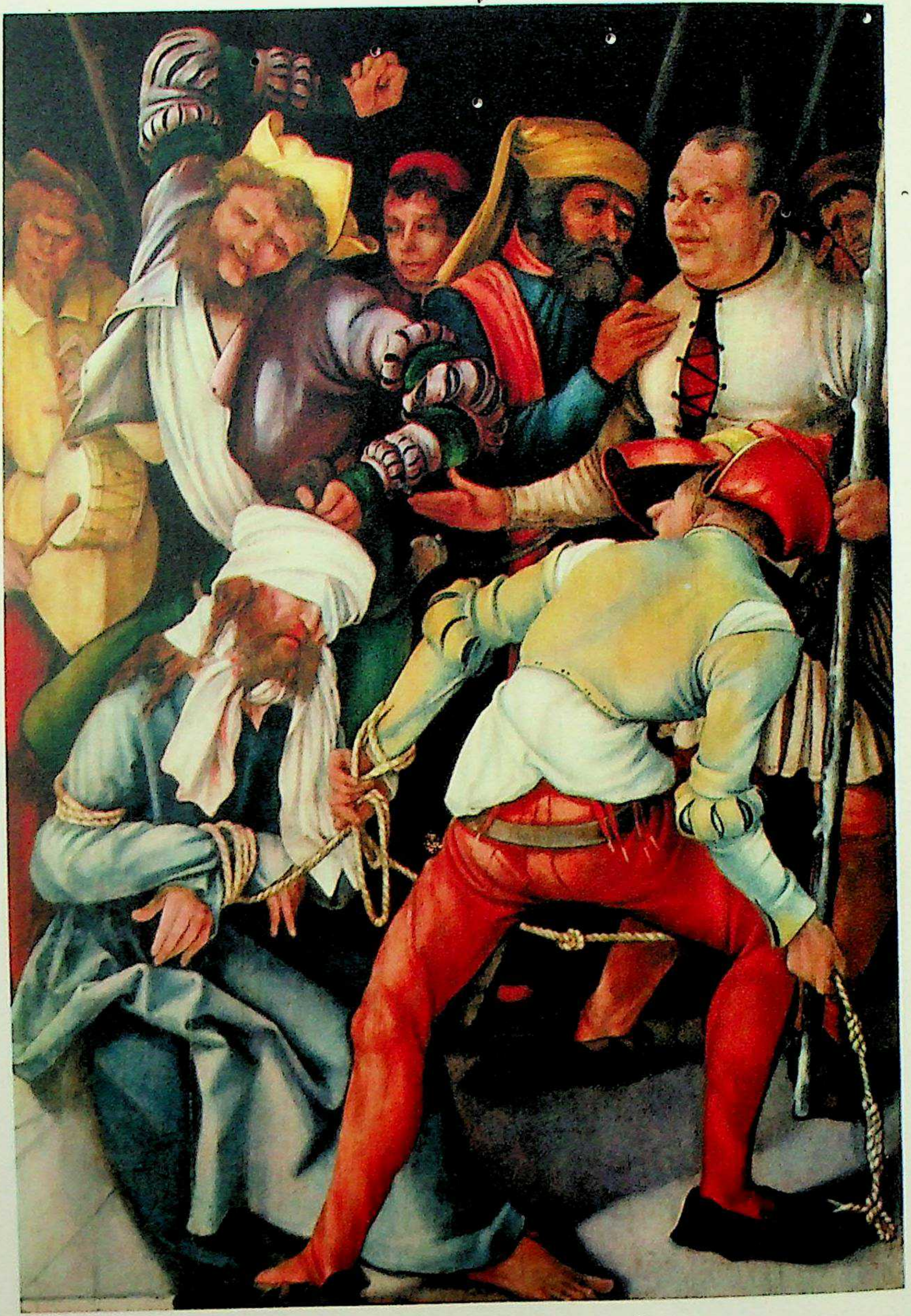
RUELAND FRUEAUF, THE YOUNGER
CRUCIFIXION 1496
Klosterneuburg



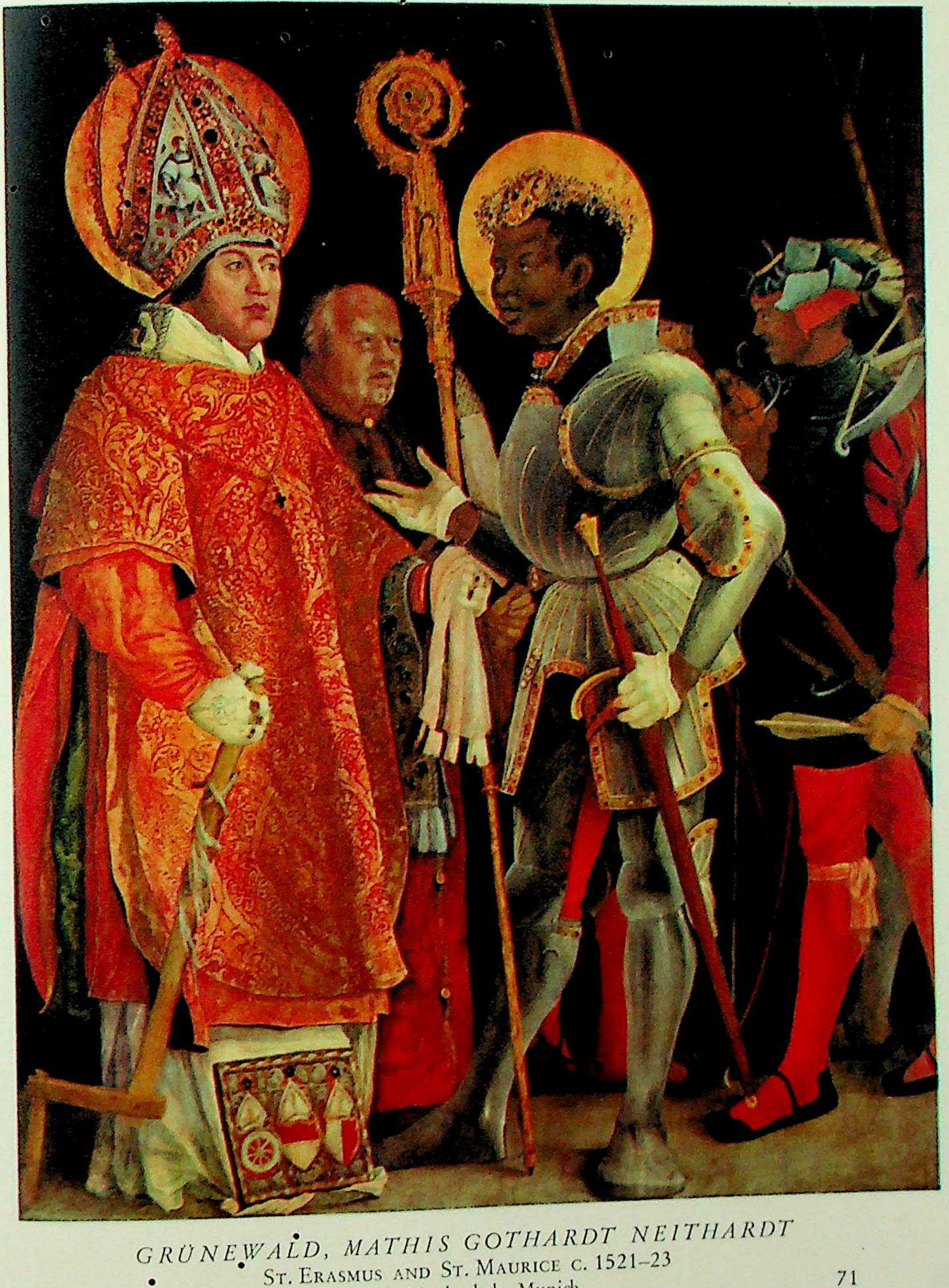
GRÜNEWALD, MATHIS GOTHARDT NEITHARDT
THE ANNUNCIATION FROM THE ISENHEIM ALTAR c. 1515
Colmar Museum



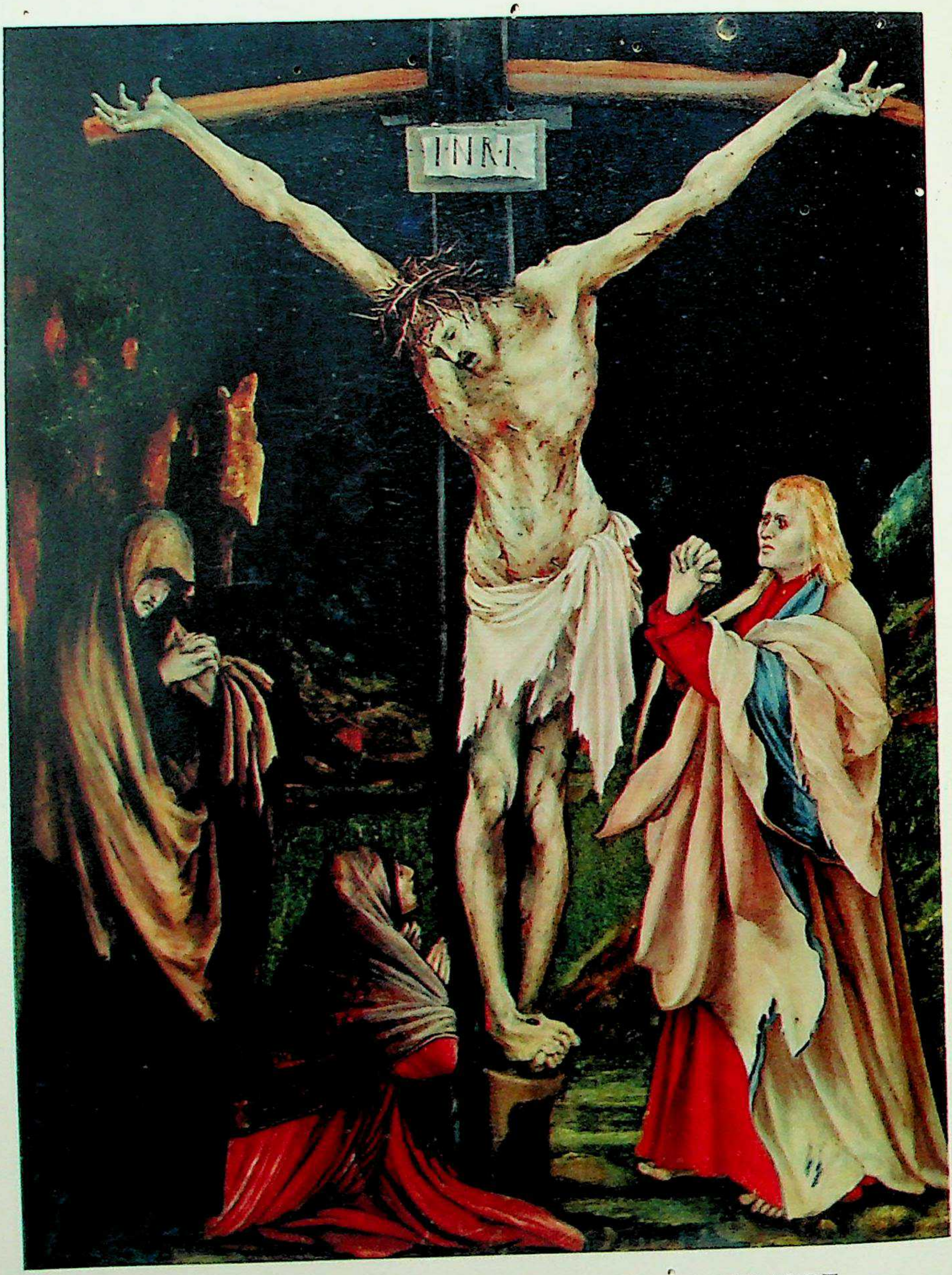
GRÜNEWALD, MATHIS GOTHARDT NEITHARDT
THE RESURRECTION FROM THE ISENHEIM ALTAR c. 1515
Colmar Museum



GRÜNEWALD, MATHIS GOTHARDT NEITHARDT
Mocking of Christ 1503
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

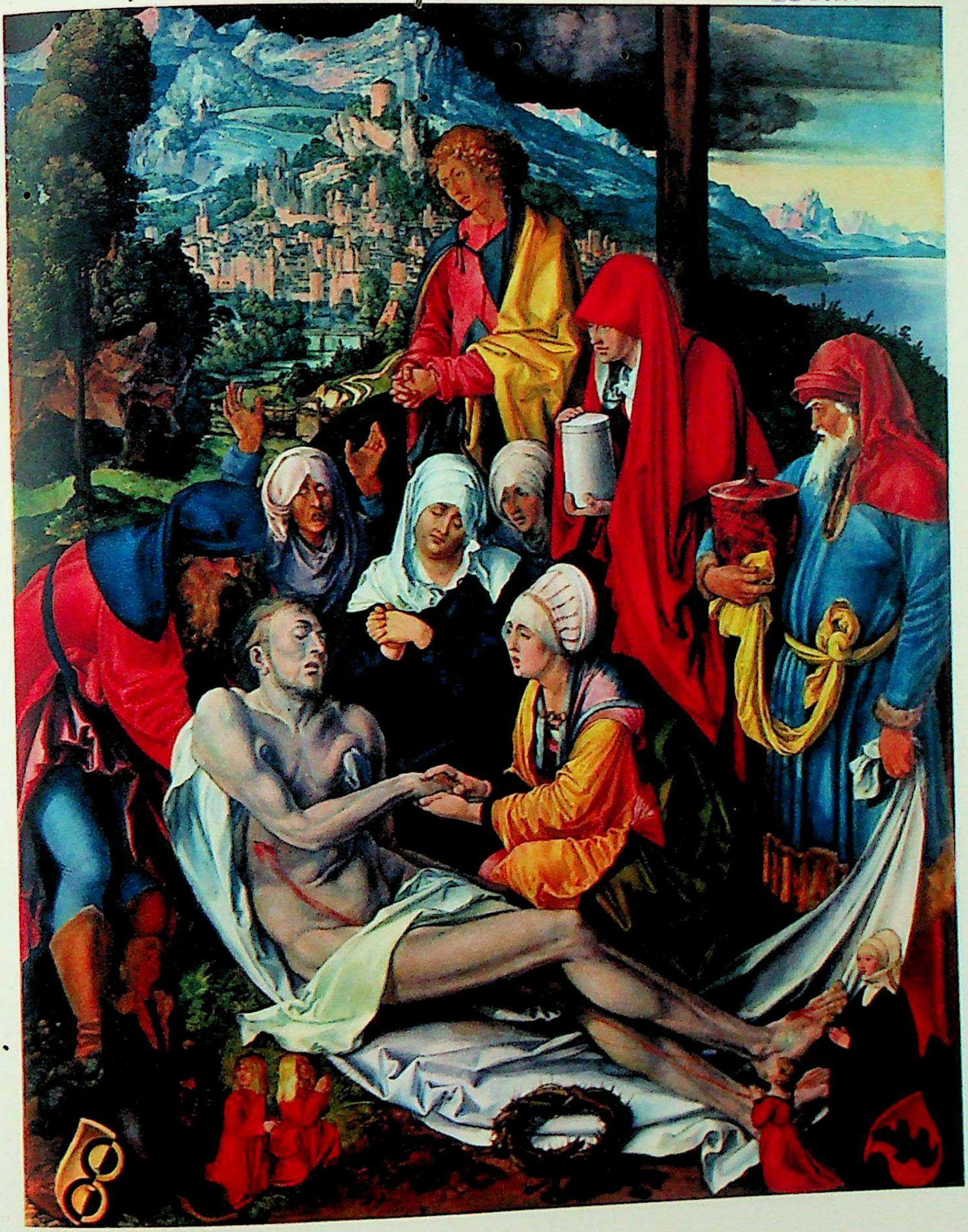


GRÜNEWALD, MATHIS GOTHARDT NEITHARDT
ST. ERASMUS AND ST. MAURICE c. 1521–23
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

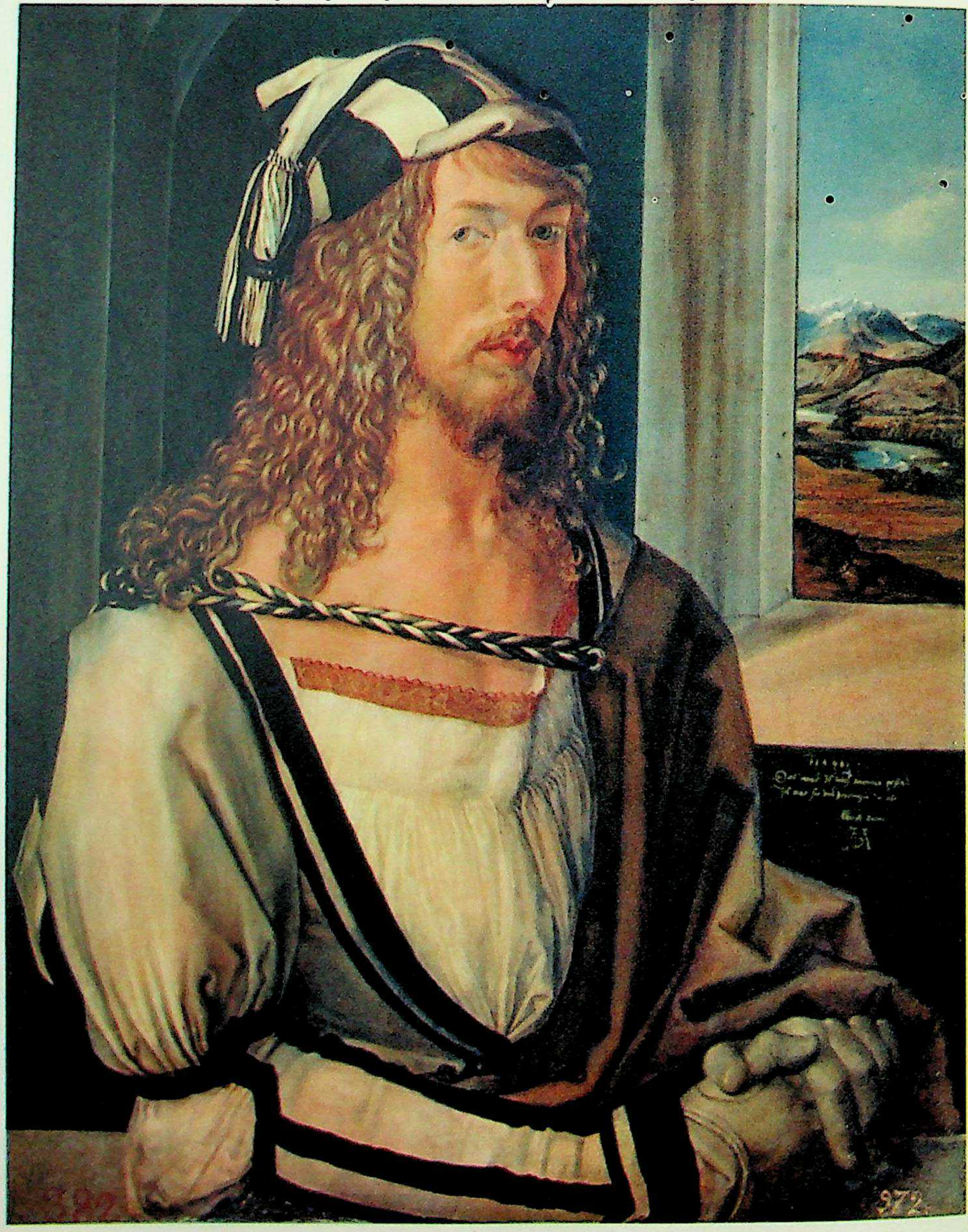


GRÜNEWALD, MATHIS GOTHARDT NEITHARDT
The Small Crucifixion c. 1505–10
Samuel H. Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington

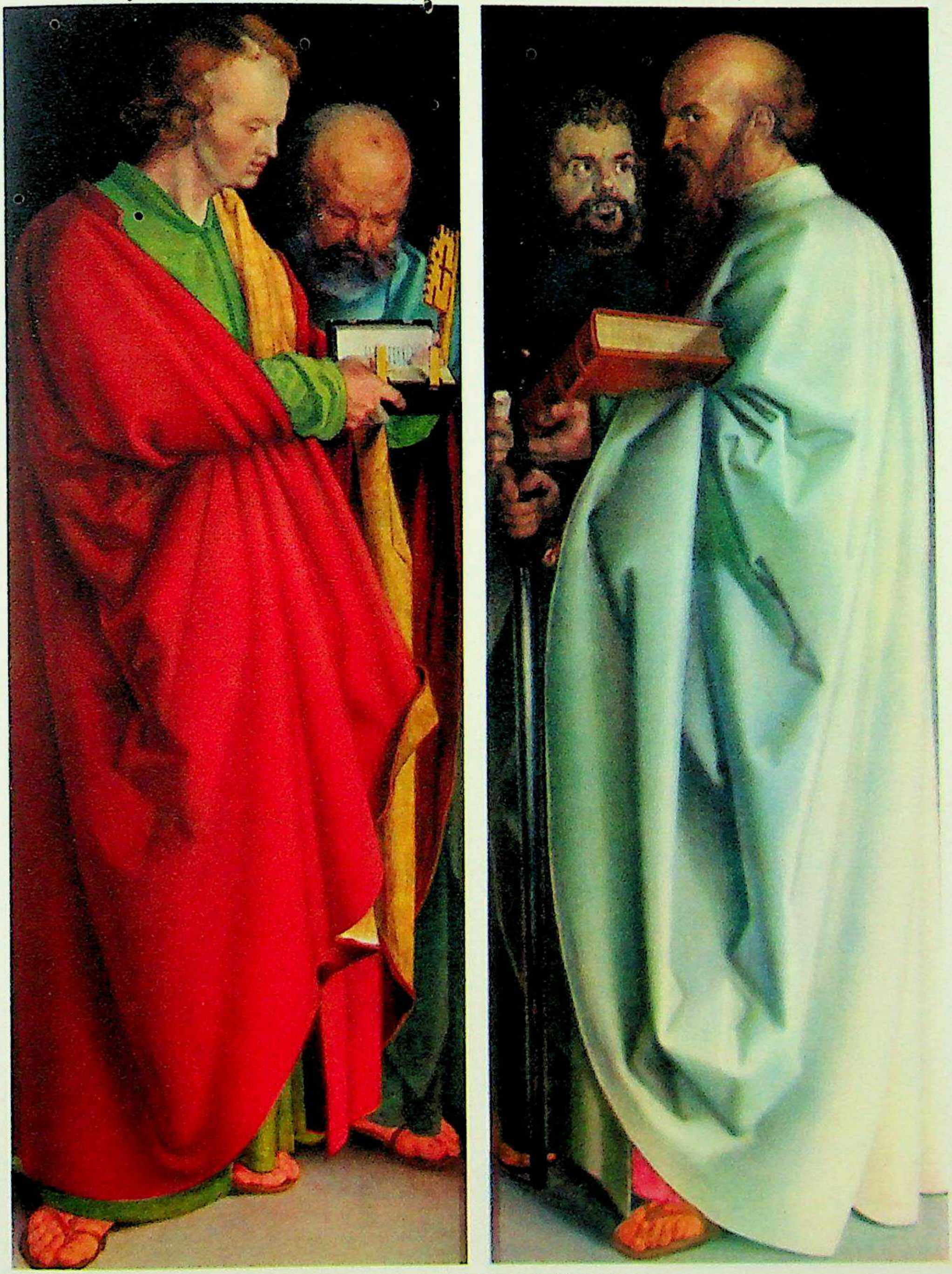
State Museum,
LUCKNOW.



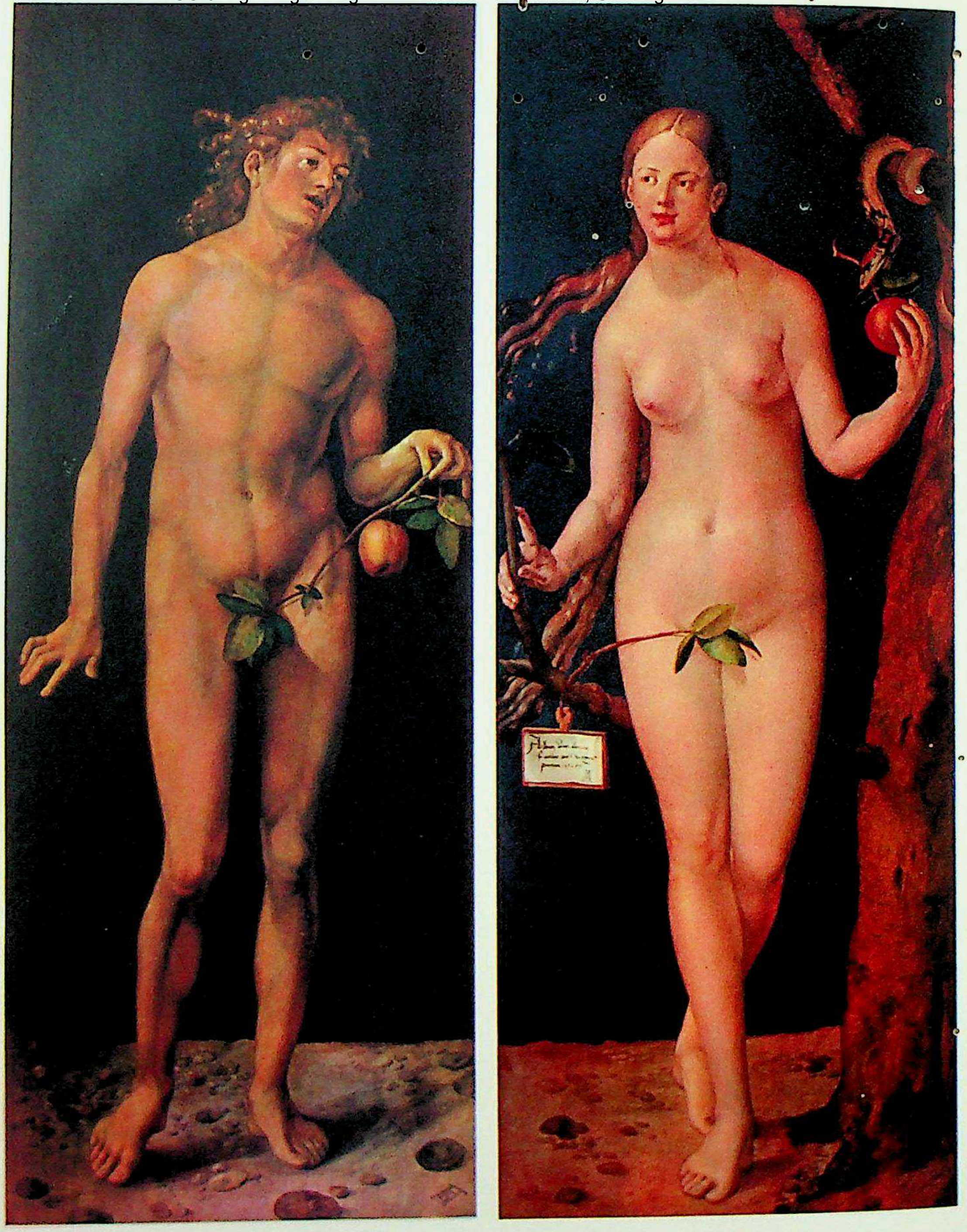
ALBRECHT DÜRER
LAMENTATION c. 1500
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



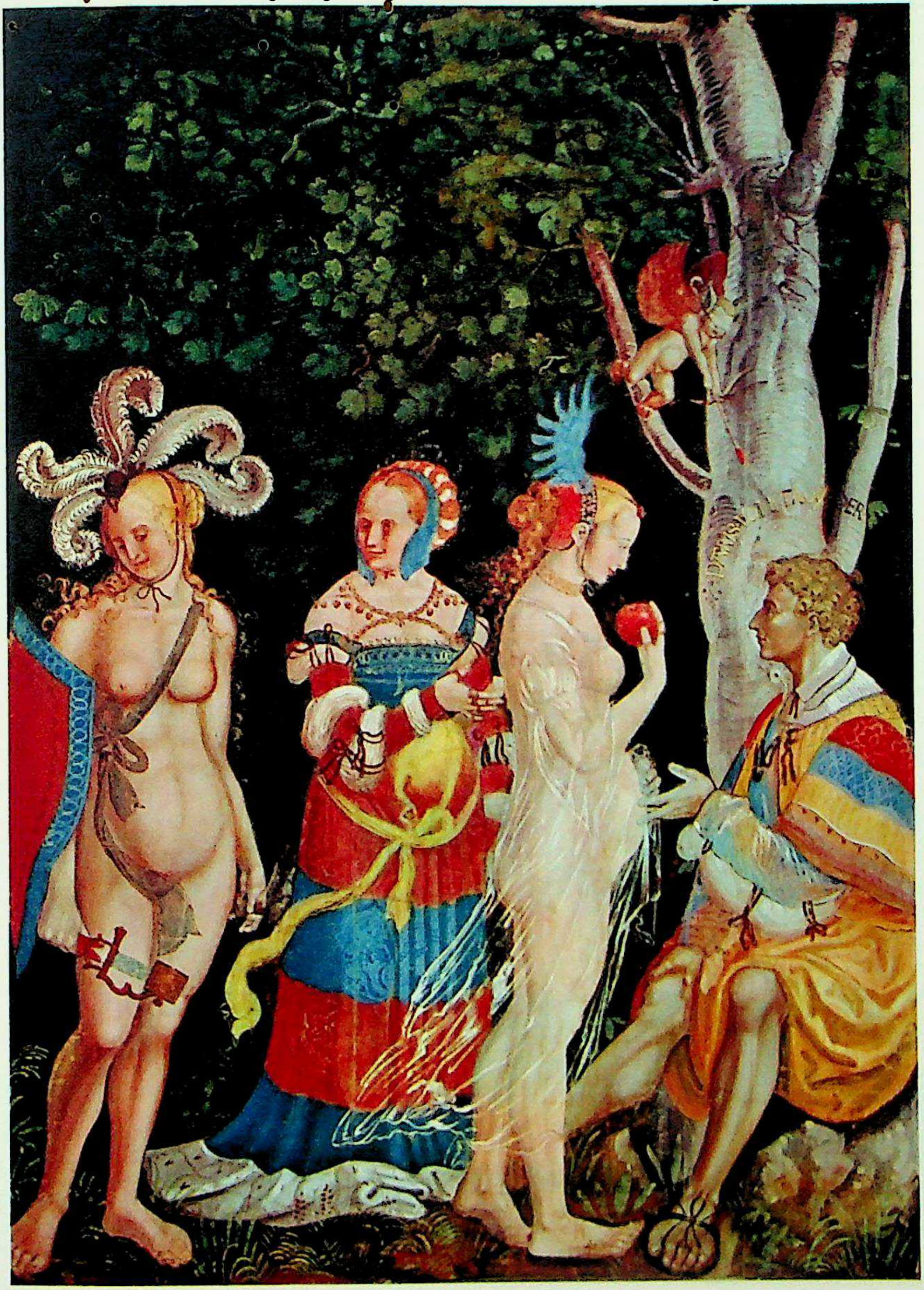
ALBRECHT DÜRER
Self-Portrait 1498
Prado, Madrid



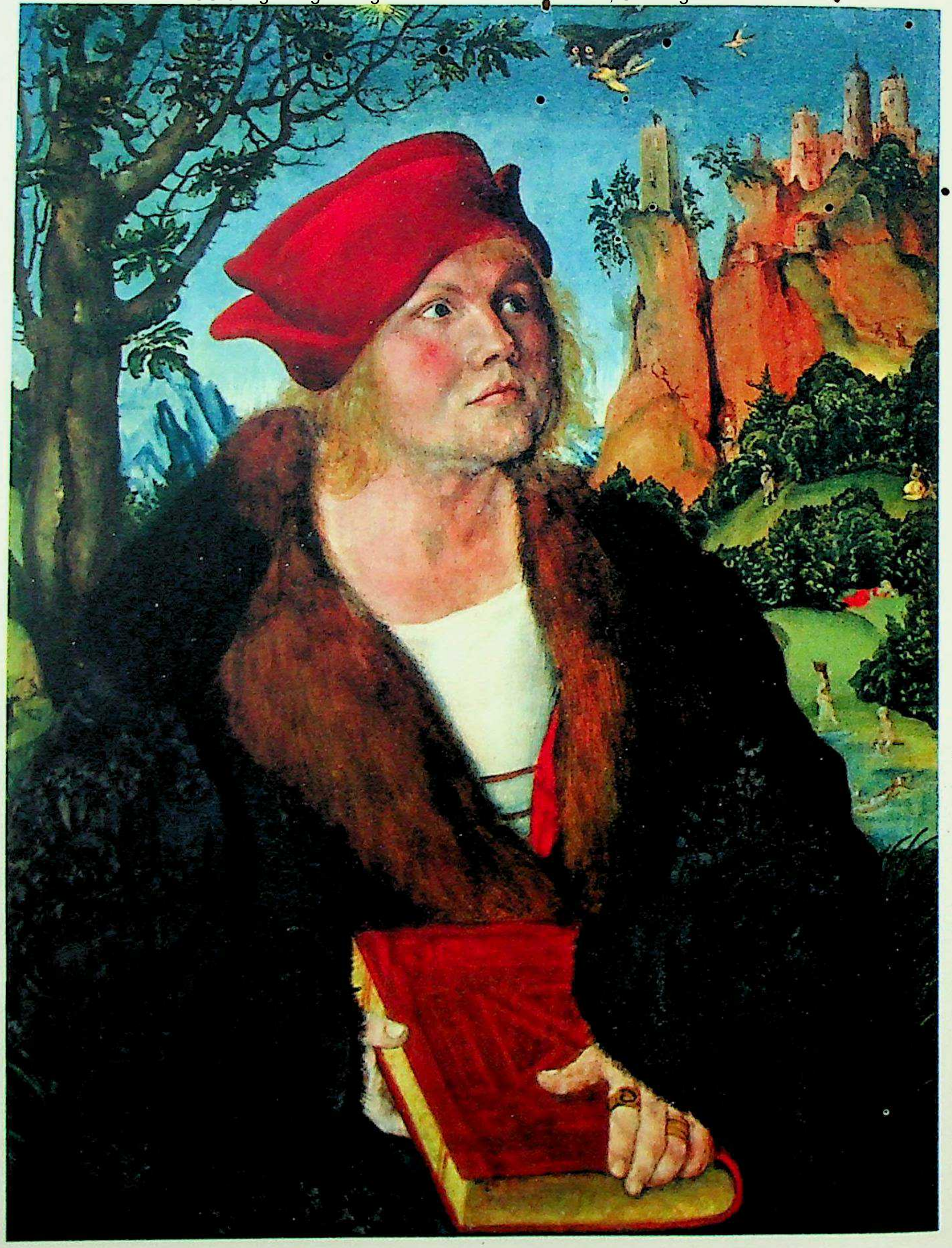
ALBRECHT DÜRER
THE FOUR APOSTLES 1526
LEFT: ST. JOHN AND ST. PETER; RIGHT: ST. PAUL AND ST. MARK
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



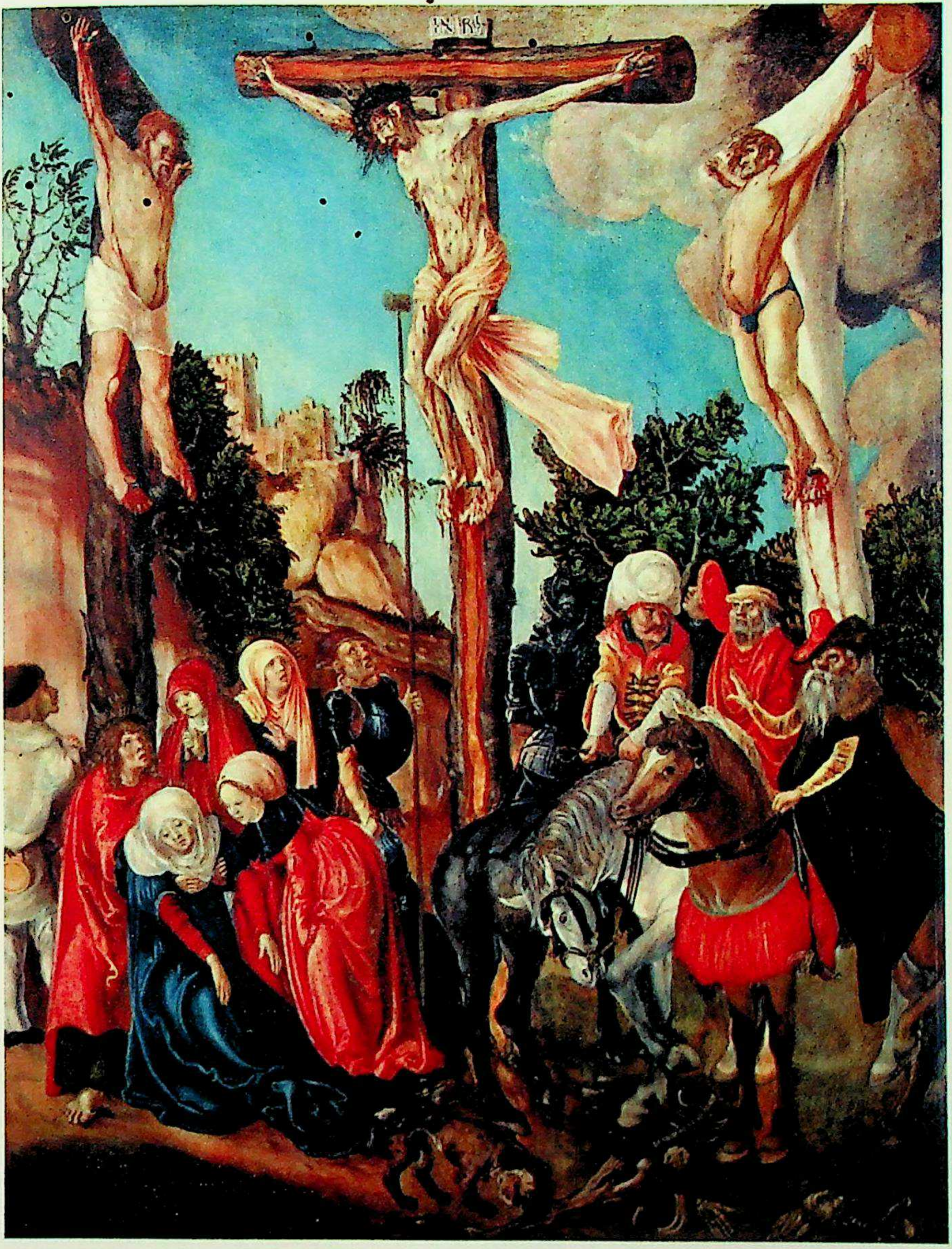
ALBRECHT DÜRER
ADAM AND EVE 1507
Prado, Madrid



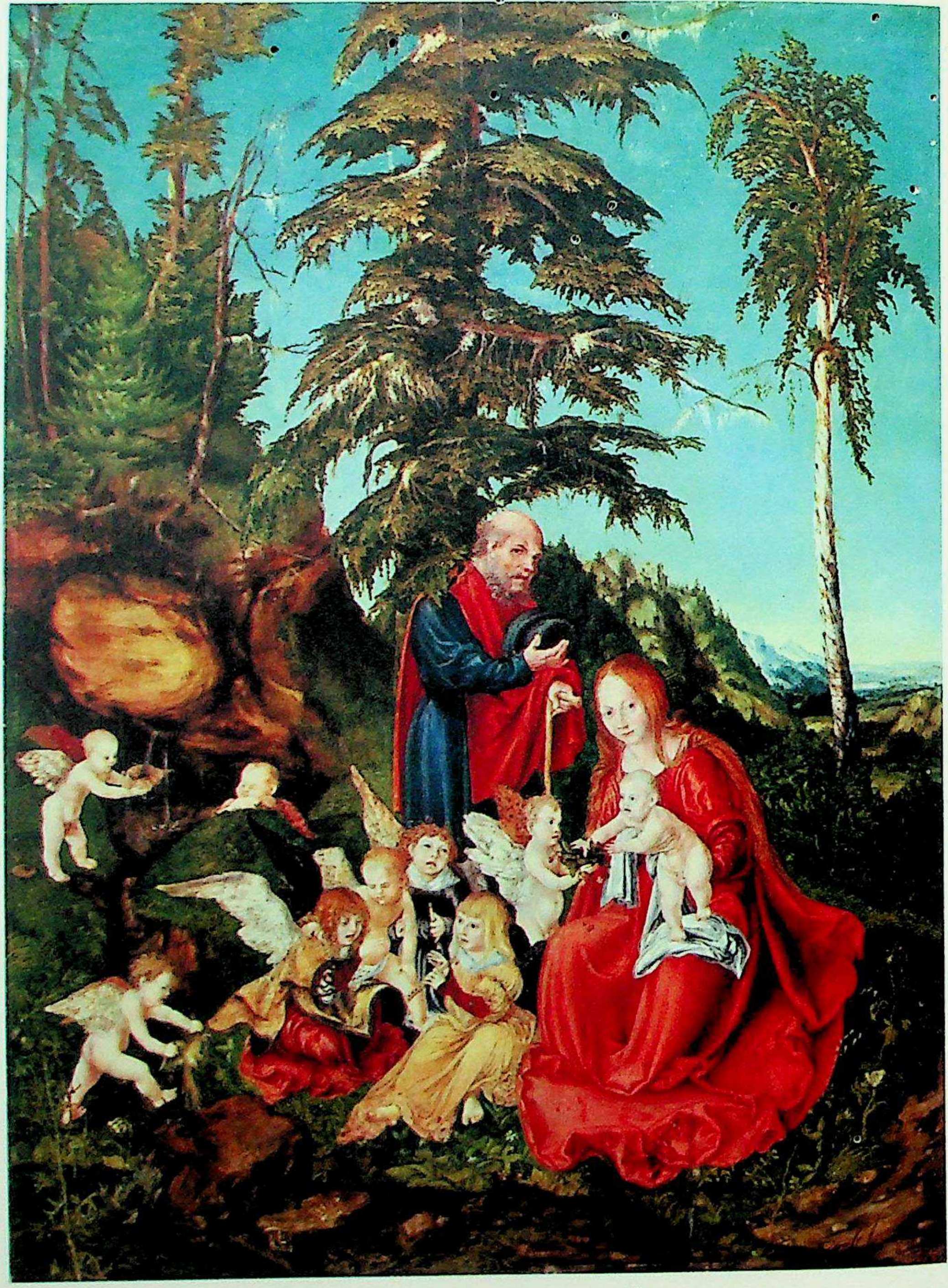
NIKOLAUS MANUEL DEUTSCH
JUDGMENT OF PARIS c. 1523
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Basle



LUCAS CRANACH, THE ELDER
PORTRAIT OF DR. JOHANNES CUSPINIAN c. 1502
O. Reinhardt Collection, Winterthur

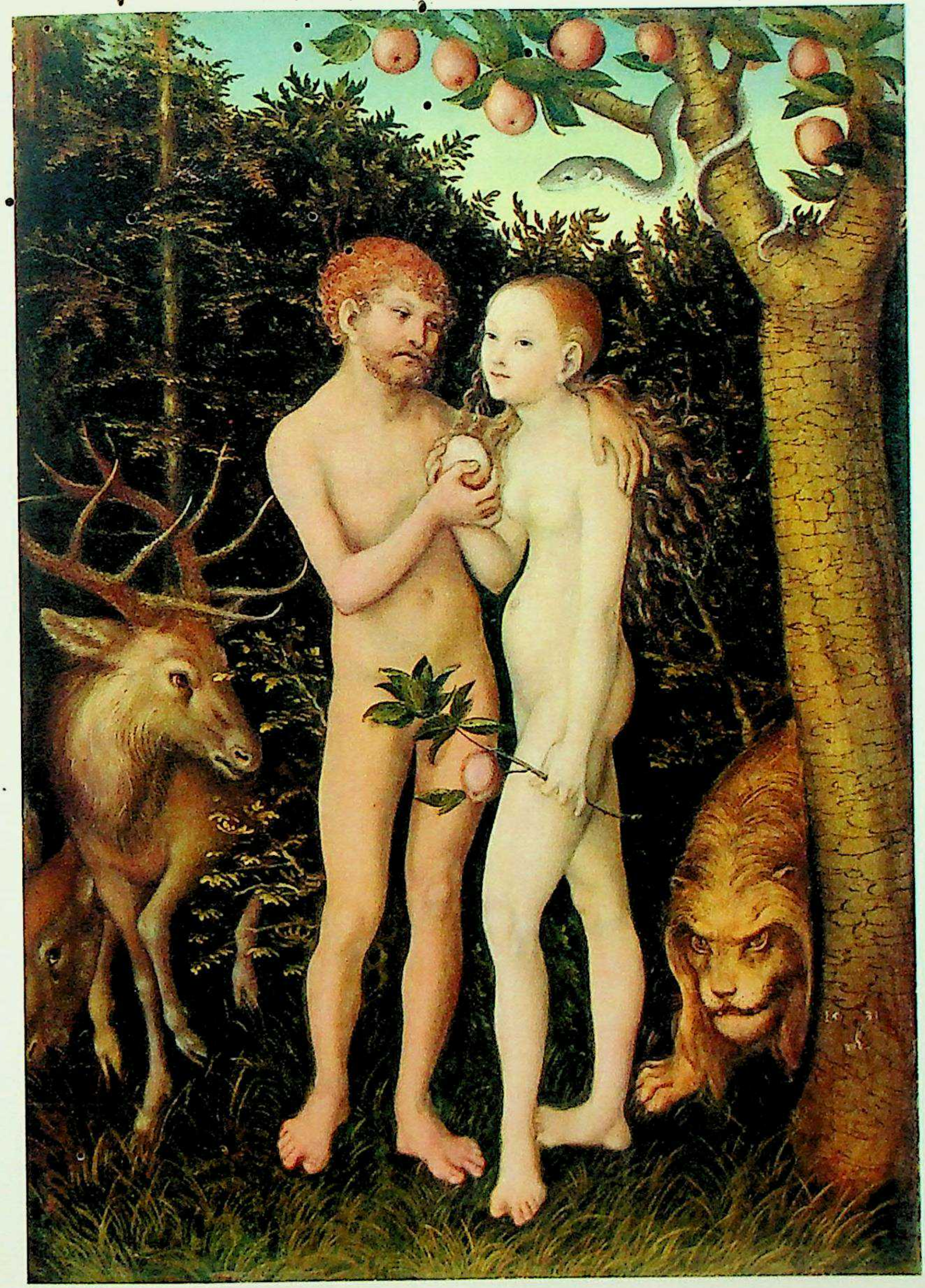


LUCAS CRANACH, THE ELDER
CRUCIFIXION c. 1500
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

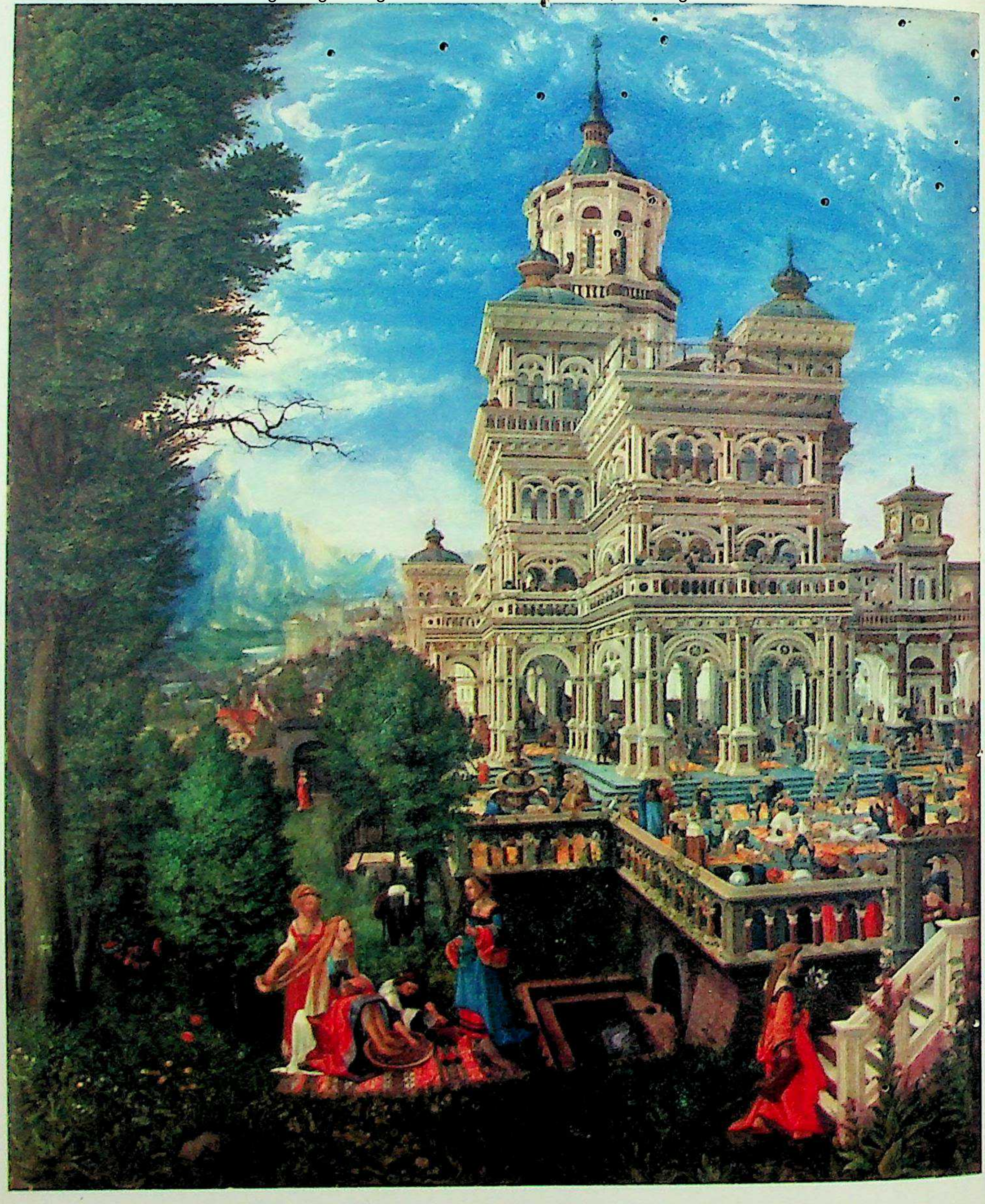


LUCAS CRANACH, THE ELDER
REST ON THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT 1504
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem

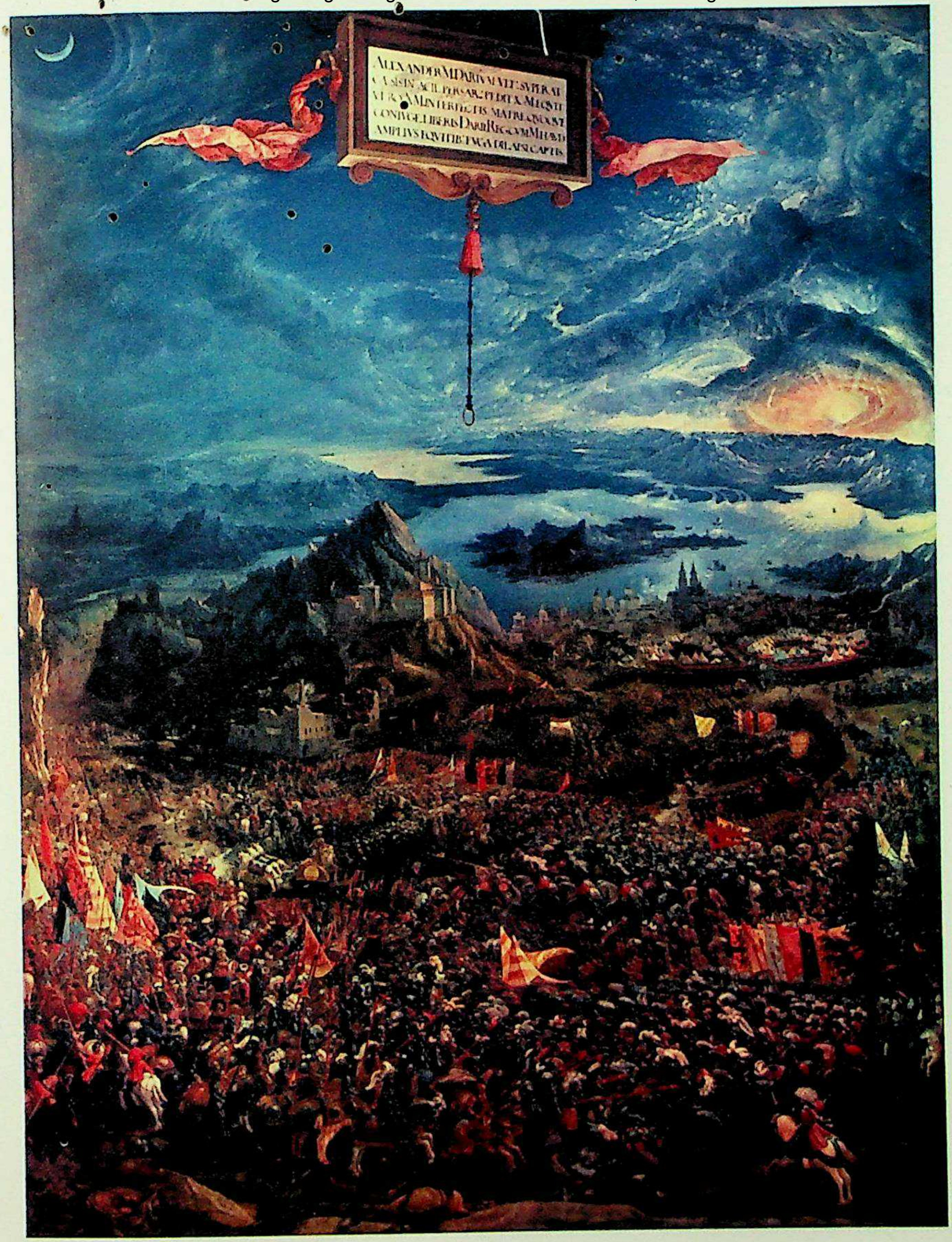
State Museum,
LUCKNOW.



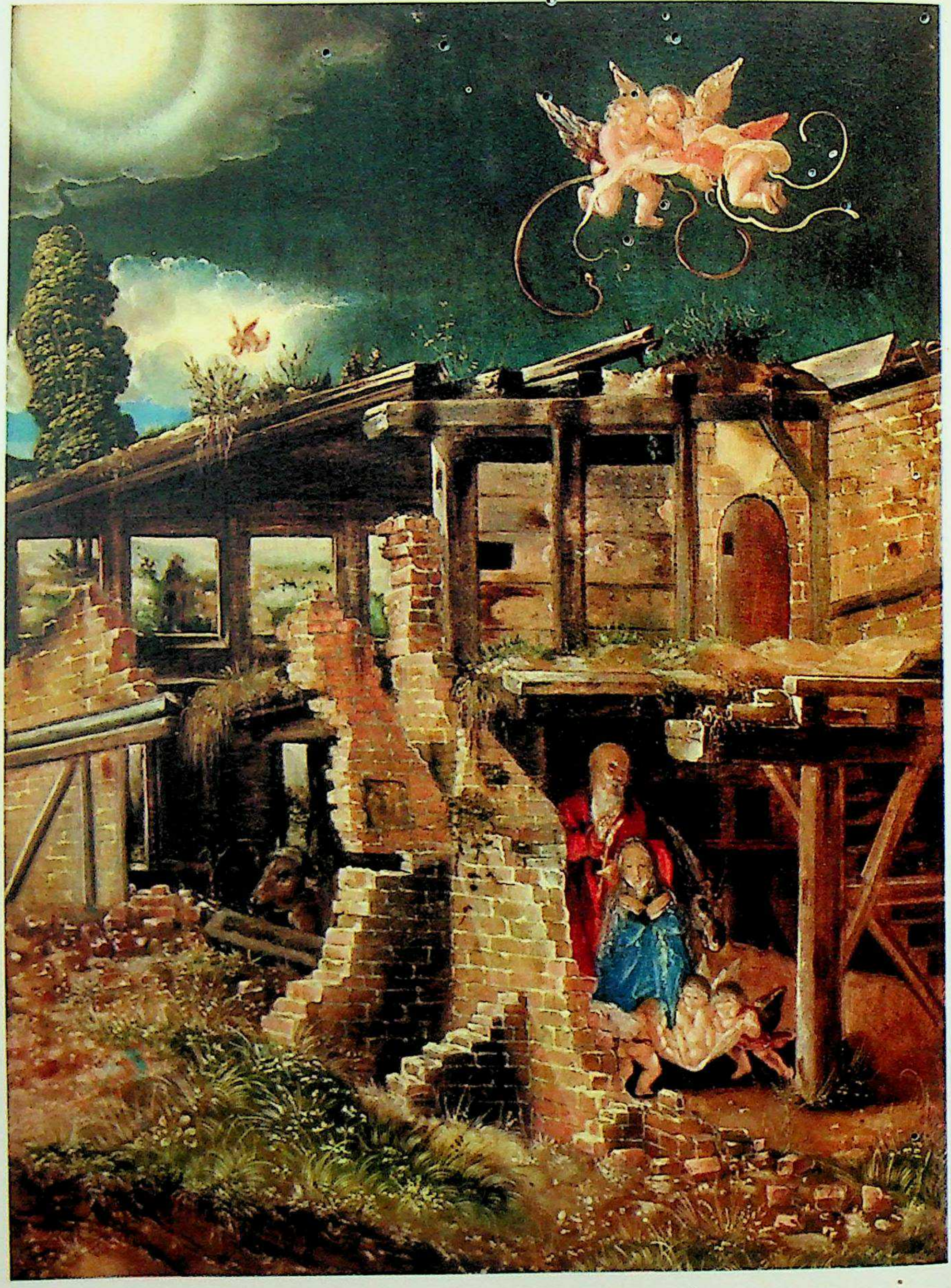
LUCAS CRANACH, THE ELDER
Adam and Eve 1533
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem



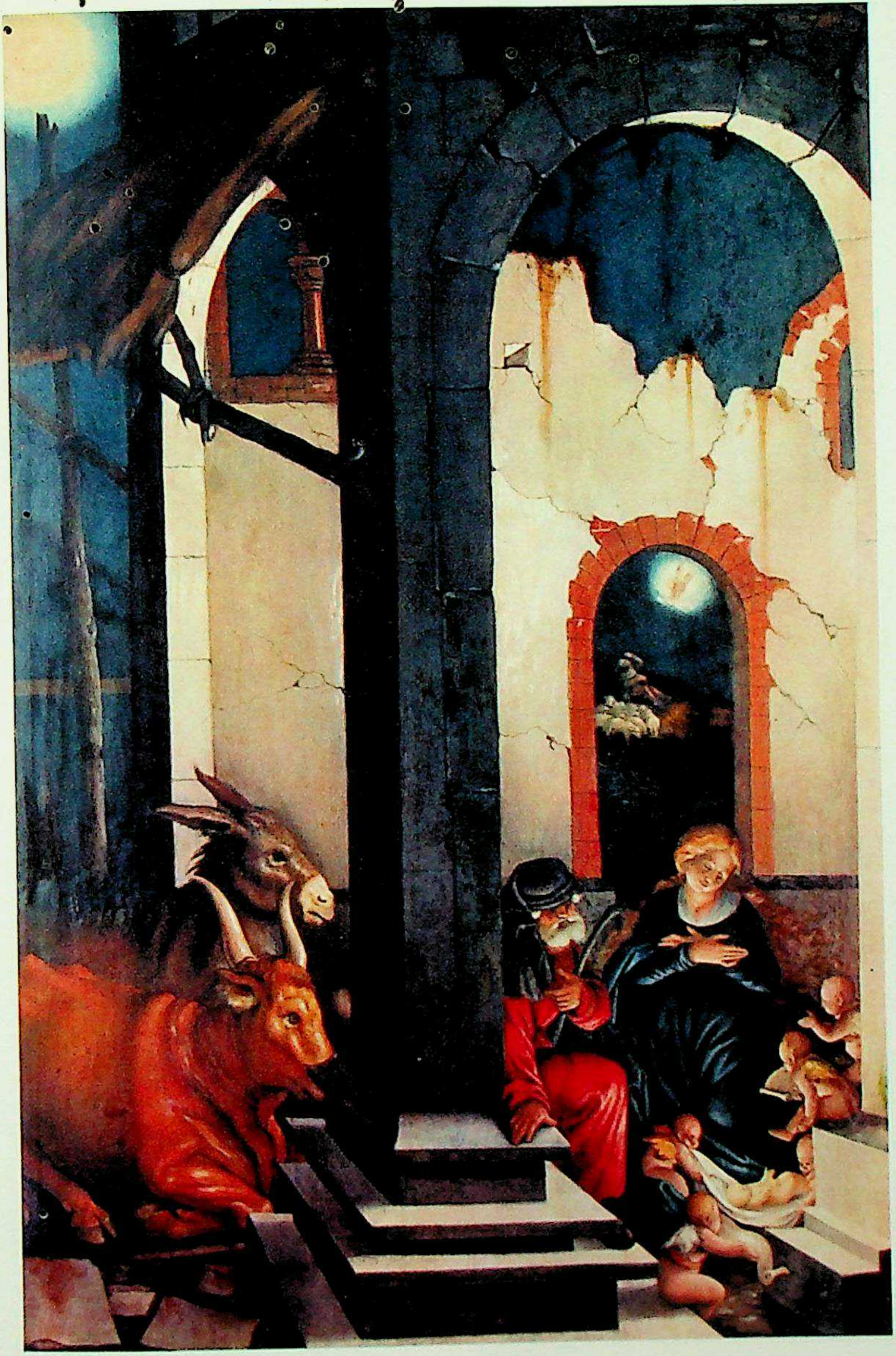
ALBRECHT ALTDORFER
Susanna at her Bath 1526
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



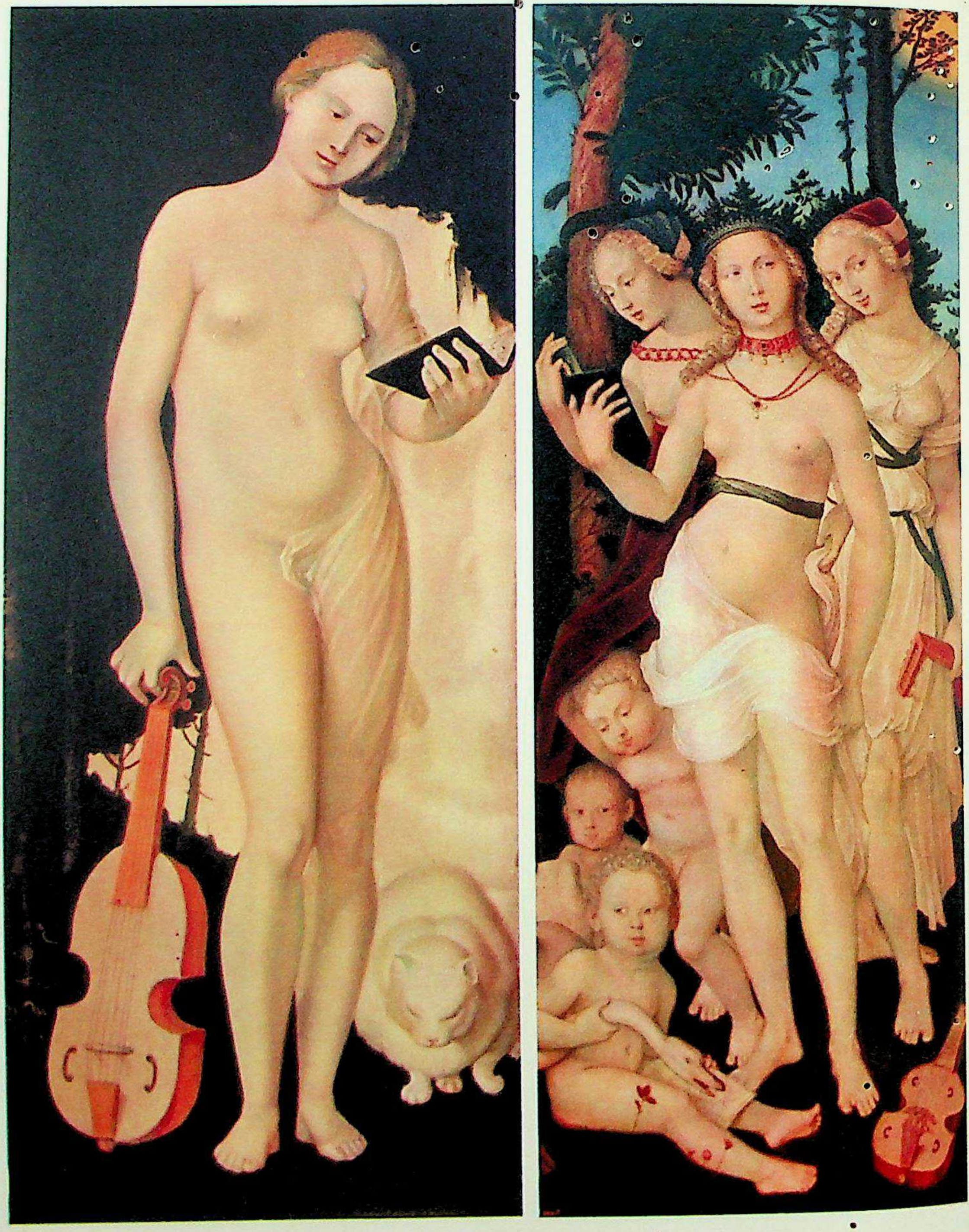
ALBRECHT ALTDORFER
BATTLE OF ALEXANDER 1529
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



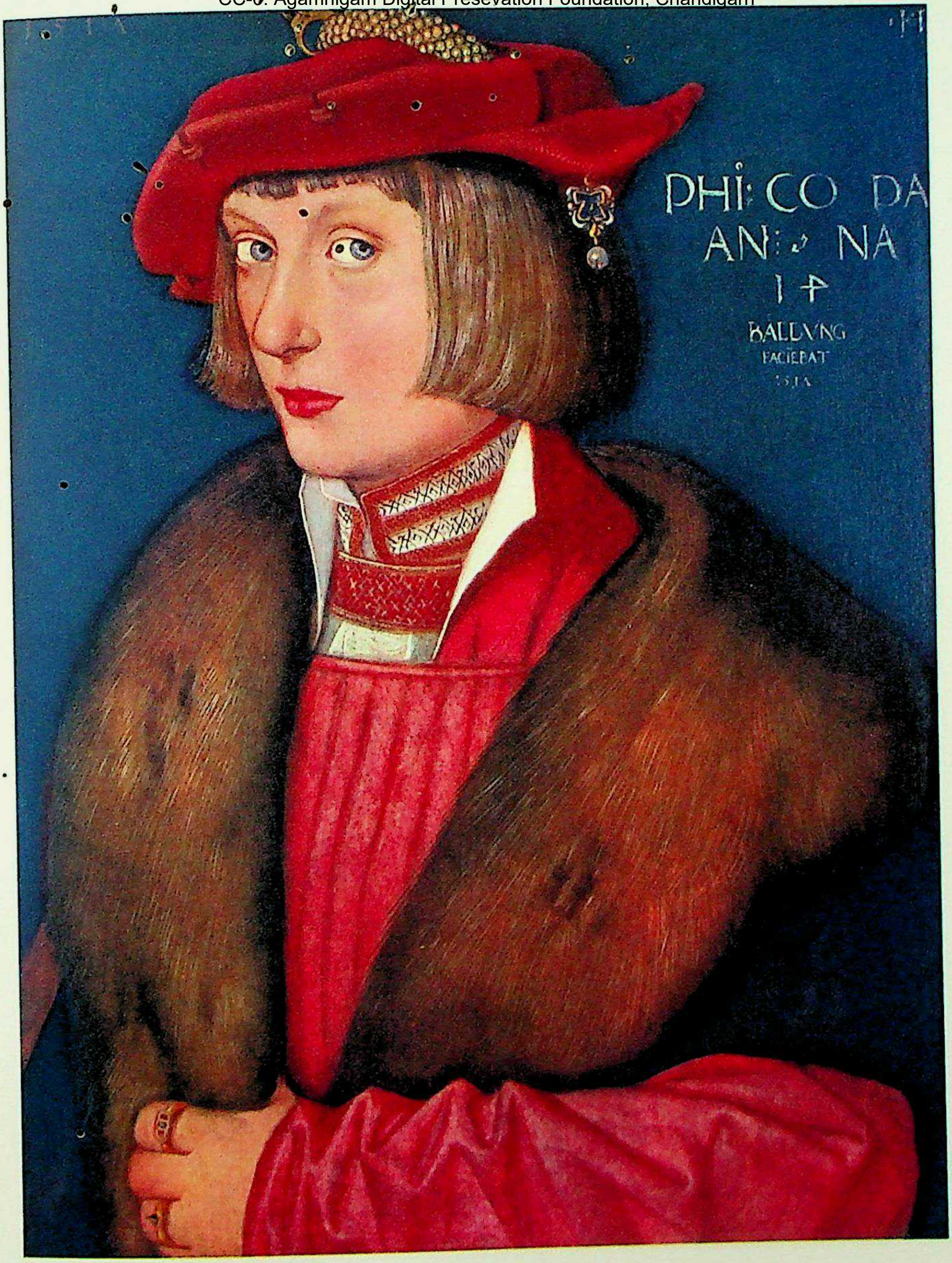
ALBRECHT ALTDORFER
Nativity c. 1513
State Museum, Berlin-Dahlem



HANS BALDUNG GRIEN
NATIVITY 1520
Alte Pinakothek, Munich



HANS BALDUNG GRIEN
ALLEGORY OF MUSIC 1529; THE THREE GRACES c. 1540
Alte Pinakothek, Munich. Prado, Madrid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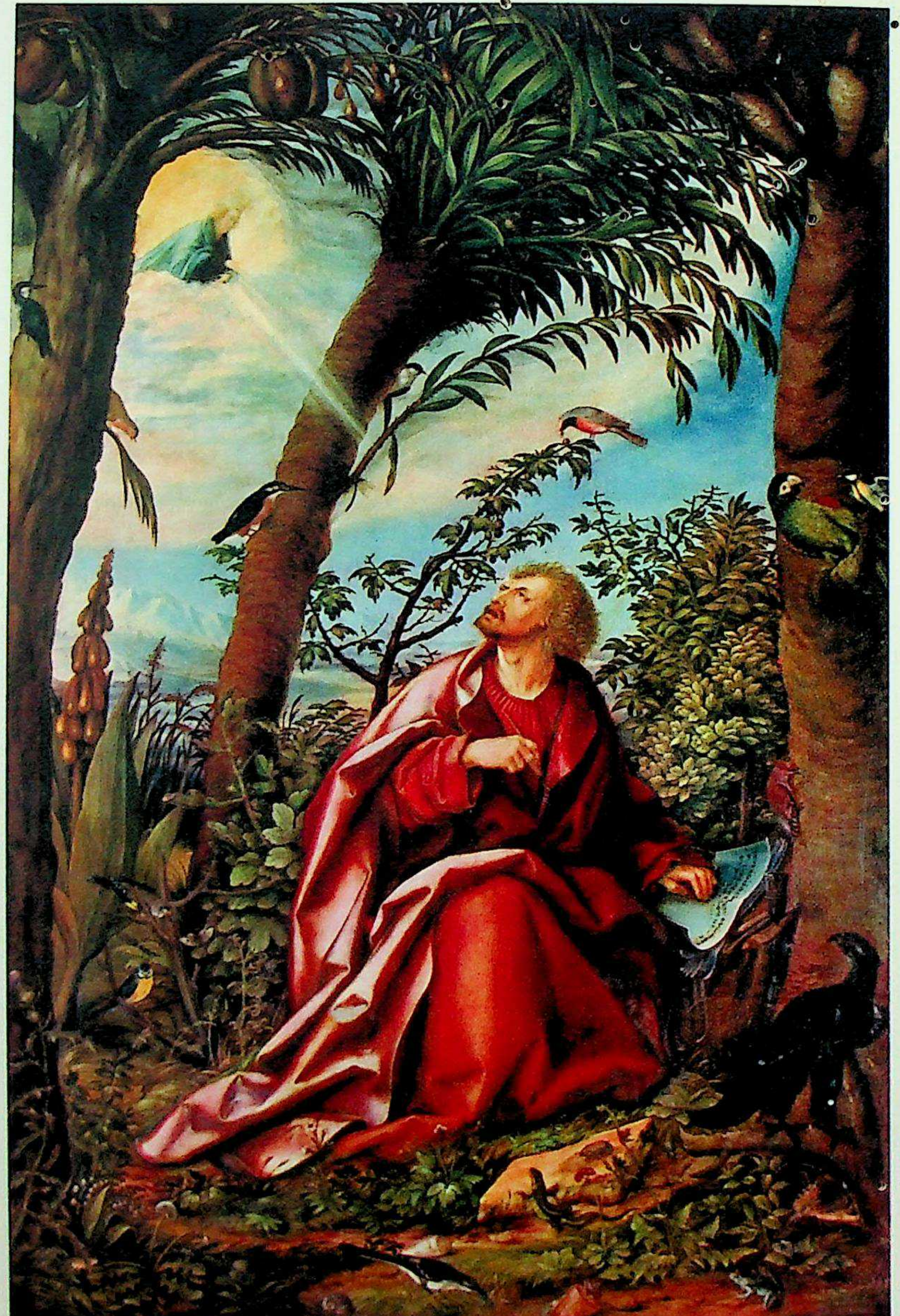
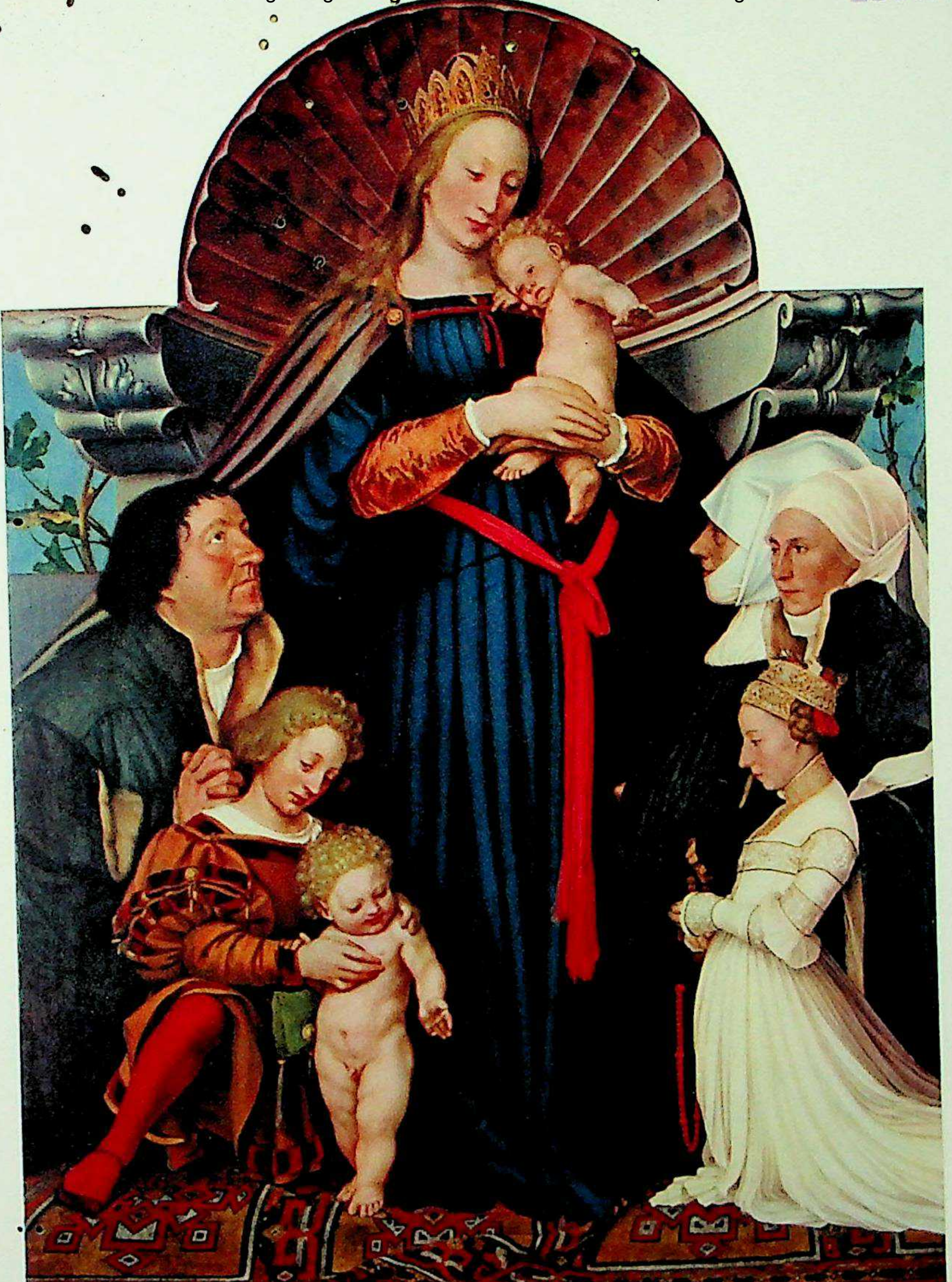
HANS BALDUNG GRIEN
PORTRAIT OF THE PALATINE COUNT PHILIP 1517
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

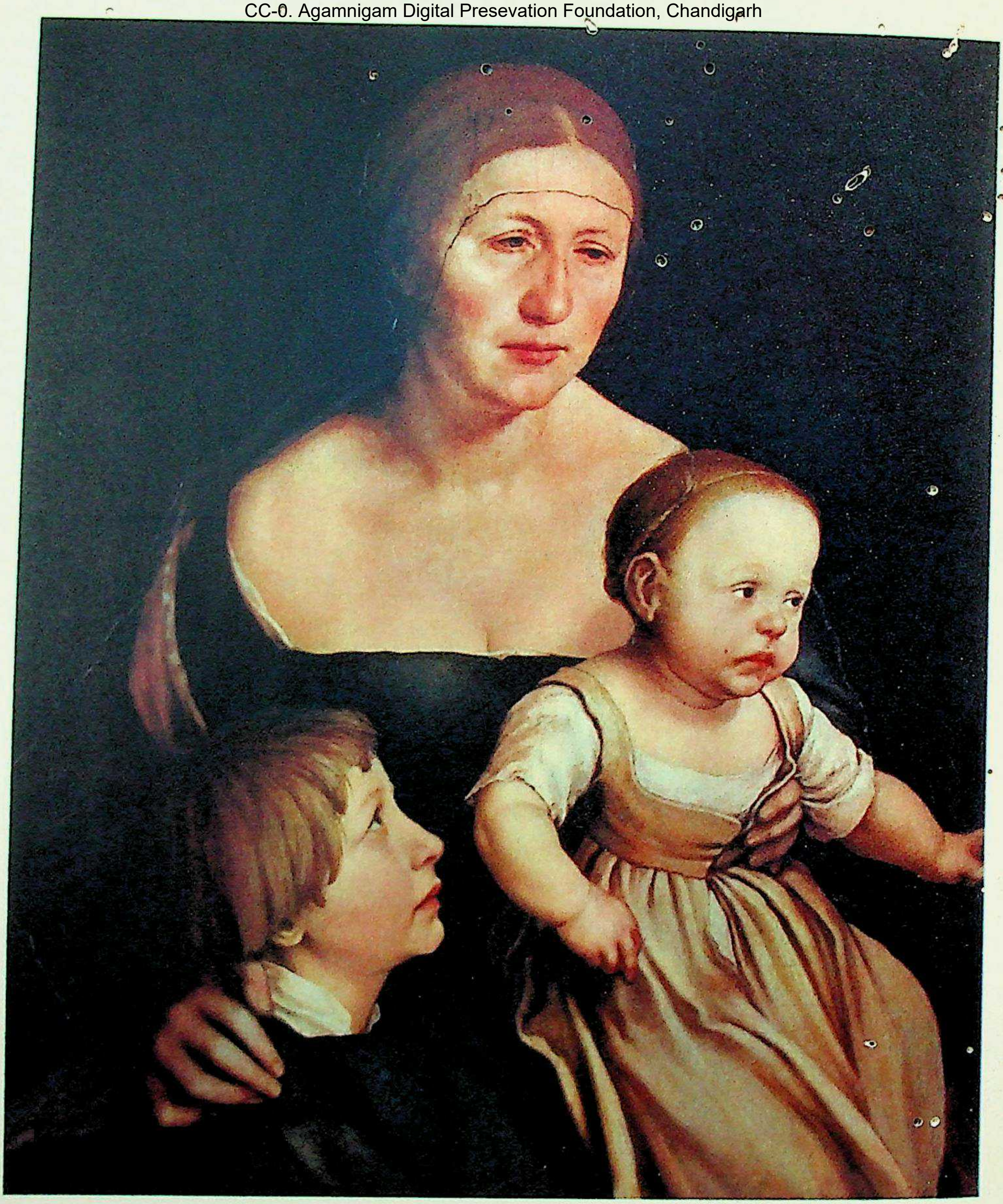


HANS BURGKMAIR, THE ELDER
St. John on Patmos 1518
Alte Pinakothek, Munich

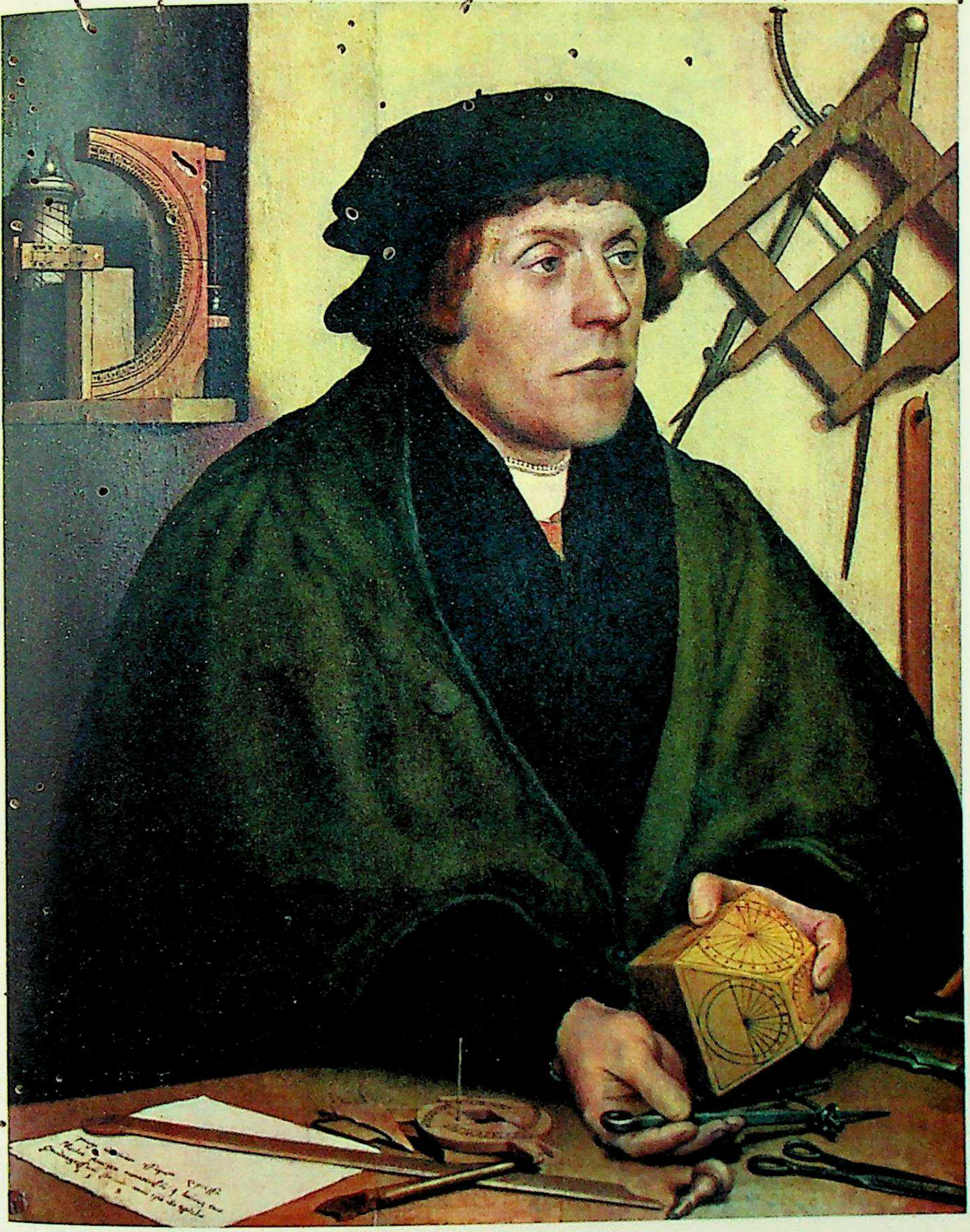
State Museum,
LUCKNOW.



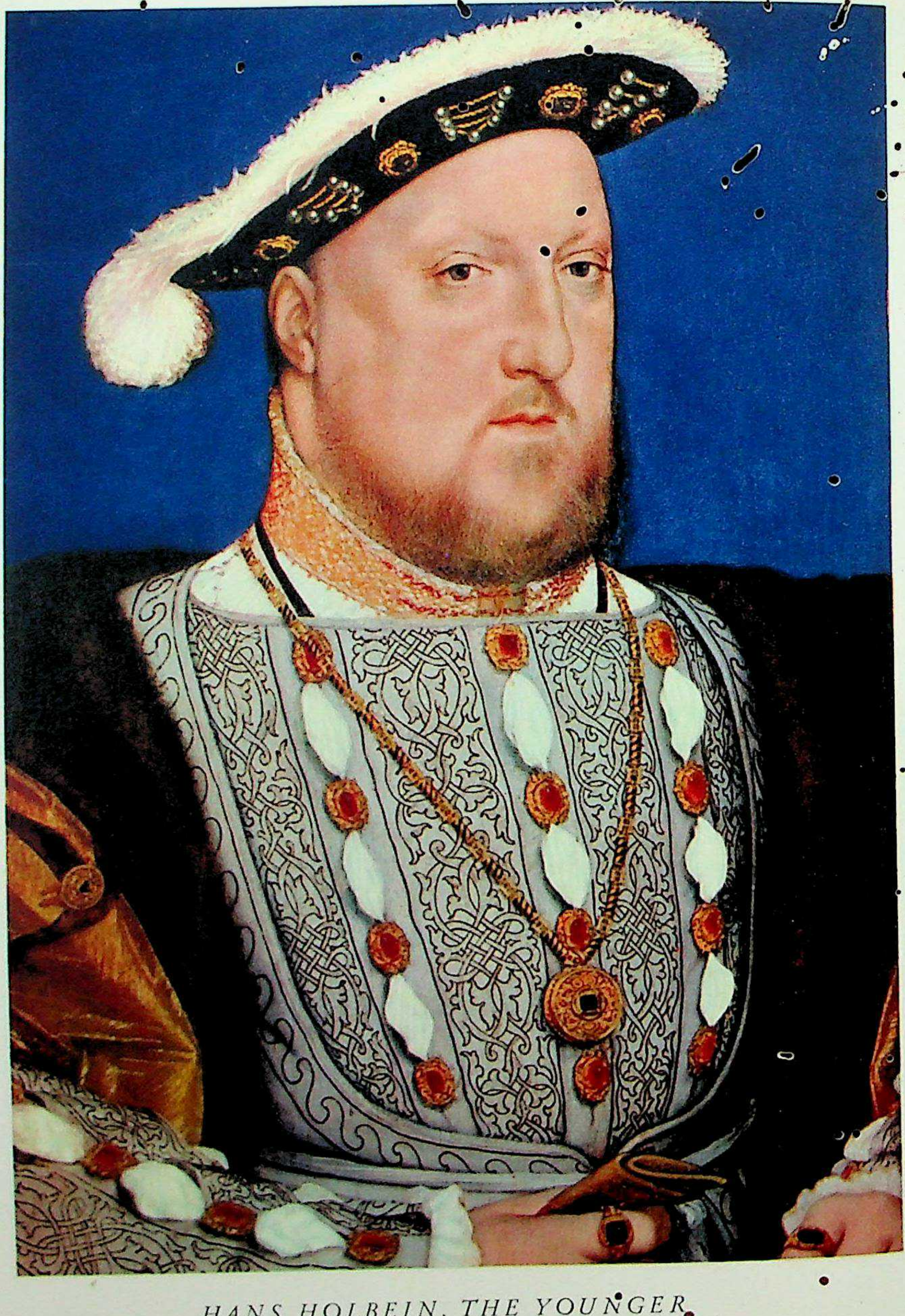
HANS HOLBEIN, THE YOUNGER
MADONNA OF THE BURGOMASTER MEYER 1528–30
Prince Hesse Collection, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Basle



HANS HOLBEIN, THE YOUNGER
The Artist's Family 1528–29
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Basle



HANS HOLBEIN, THE YOUNGER
NICHOLAS KRATZER, ASTRONOMER OF HENRY VIII. 1528
Louvre, Paris



HANS HOLBEIN, THE YOUNGER
PORTRAIT OF HENRY VIII. 1536
Thyssen Collection, Lugano

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ALBRECHT ALTDORFER

Born c. 1480, died between 12 February and 29 March 1538 at Regensburg. Probably the son of the manuscript painter, Ulrich Altdorfer. 1505, established at Regensburg. 1511, journey to Austria along the banks of the Danube. 1519–26, Town Counsellor. City architect. His early work is unknown. Water-colour painter and designer for wood engravings.

HANS BALDUNG GRIEN

Born 1484 or 1485; his family came from Schwäbisch-Gmünd; died 1545 at Strasbourg. 1502 or 1503, pupil of Dürer. 1509, became a citizen of Strasbourg. 1510, married the daughter of a rich bourgeois. 1511, settled in Freiburg in Breisgau. 1517, renewed his citizenship of Strasbourg. 1527, bought a house. 1533–34, member of the Guild. 1545, Town Counsellor. Designer for wood engraving, book illustration, stained-glass.

HANS BURGKMAIR, the ELDER

Born 1473 at Augsburg, died October 1531 at Augsburg. Son of Thomas and father of Hans Burgkmair the Younger. Pupil of Martin Schongauer. 1498, inscribed as member of the Painters' Guild. An Italian journey seems almost certain on the grounds of his work. Designer for wood engraving, book illustrator (for Emperor Maximilian), among the first German wood engravers to use colour.

LUCAS CRANACH, the ELDER

Lucas, whose family name was Sunder or Müller, was born 1472 at Kronach (hence the name Cranach), died 16 October 1553 at Weimar. Son of a painter and father of Lucas Cranach the Younger. 1502, journeyed along the Danube to Vienna. 1505, called to Wittenberg by the Elector Frederick the Wise, married the daughter of a patrician of Gotha. 1508, journey to the Low Countries, received his coat-of-arms. 1519, municipal treasurer. 1520, licensed to be apothecary, bookseller. 1537–40, mayor. 1550, Augsburg, shared the imprisonment of John Frederick of Saxony. Designer for wood engraving, book illustrator, engraver.

ALBRECHT DÜRER

Born 21 May 1471 at Nuremberg, died 26 April 1528 at Nuremberg. Son of a goldsmith. 1486–90, apprenticed to his father, and then to Michael Wolgemut. 1490–94, made several journeys (Lake of Constance, Basle, Colmar). 1494, married Agnes Frey, daughter of a bourgeois. 1494, first Italian journey. 1497, had his own studio with a printing press. 1505–6, second Italian journey, to North Italy and Venice. 1509, bought a house. Town Counsellor. 1515, onwards, worked for Emperor Maximilian. 1520–21, journey to the Low Countries. Designer for wood engraving, book illustrator, engraver, etcher. Treatises: 1525, on geometry and perspective; 1527, on fortification; 1528, on proportion. Wrote diary on his journey to the Low Countries.

RUELAND FRUEAUF, the YOUNGER

Born c. 1465–70, died after 1545, probably at Passau. Son of Rueland Frueauf the Elder, born at Passau 1440–50, died 1507.

GRÜNEWALD

Identified as Mathis Gothardt Neithardt in 1938. Born between 1455 and 1480, probably c. 1460 at Würzburg, died 31 August 1528 at Halle sur Saale. 1485–90, worked at Aschaffenburg. 1508–14, court painter to the Archbishop of Mainz. 1501–26, resident at Seligenstadt; 1527 at Frankfurt. Connected with Peasants' Revolt and religious conflicts. Early works are unknown and uncertain. The only authentic works are dated after 1503.

HANS HOLBEIN, the ELDER

Born 1460–70 at Augsburg, died 1524 at Isenheim. Worked at Isenheim, later at Ulm and Frankfurt but mainly at Augsburg. Authentic works are dated from 1493 to 1519 and are unknown before then.

HANS HOLBEIN, the YOUNGER

Born 1497 or 1498 at Augsburg, died between 7 October and 29 November 1543 in London. Son of Hans Holbein the Elder. Pupil of his father and of Hans Herbster of Strasbourg. 1515–16, resident at Basle. 1518–19, probably journeyed to North Italy (Como, Milan) and France. 1519, entered Painters' Guild. 1520, became a citizen of Basle. 1526–28, first London visit 1528–32, returned to Basle. 1535, onwards, definitely settled in London and became Court painter to Henry VIII. Designer for wood engraving, book illustrator, designer of stained-glass windows, also painted frescoes.

KONRAD VON SOEST

Probably born at Dortmund where he married. Perhaps the father or a relation of Wernerus Pictor de Susato mentioned at Dortmund 1348. Only certain dates: altar of Wildung (1403–4); altar of the Madonna, Dortmund (1420). Influenced by the French and Burgundian schools.

STEFAN LOCHNER

Born 1410 probably at Meersburg (Lake of Constance), died 1451 at Cologne. 1435 onwards, lived at Cologne. 1442, his name is mentioned in a document for the first time. Bought a house. 1447, elected to the Town Council, and re-elected in 1450.

NIKOLAUS MANUEL DEUTSCH

Born c. 1484 at Berne and died there in 1530 (the family originally came from Piedmont). His father was a solicitor. Studied under Dr. Thüring Frickart. Probably a pupil of the Master of the Carnation. Town Counsellor of Berne. Ambassador, participator in the Renaissance, statesman, poet. Designer for wood engravings.

MASTER BERTRAM

Born c. 1345 at Minden in Westphalia, died between 1414 and 1415 at Hamburg. 1390, made a will. Journey to Italy (pilgrimage to Rome). 1410, made a second will. Became a master of the Painters' Guild.

MASTER FRANCKE

Dates of birth and death unknown. Only certain date is that of a contract with the Englandsfahrer company in 1424. Probably educated in France (school of book illustration in Paris). The identification of Master Francke with a monk of Zutfen (Holland) is unlikely.

MASTER OF THE LIFE OF MARY

Takes his name from a series of paintings dedicated to the Life of Mary. Influenced by Flemings, especially Dirk Bouts. Worked in Cologne between 1450 and 1480.

MASTER OF THE POLLING ALTAR

Worked at Munich c. 1435–50. Takes his name from the altar of Polling. Can probably be identified with the painter Gabriel Angler, who worked at Munich between 1434 and 1482.

HANS MULTSCHER

Born c. 1400 at Reichenhofen, died before 3 March 1457. The only identified works are his eight paintings of the Wurzach altarpiece (1437). Wood-carver.

Michael PACHER

Born 1435 probably at Brixen, died in July or August 1498 at Salzburg. 1467, mentioned as a citizen of Bruneck. Probably a relation (father?) of Frederick Pacher. Almost certainly journeyed to Italy. Wood-carver.

Hans PLEYDENWURFF

Probably born at Bamberg, died 1472 at Nuremberg. Lived at Nuremberg from 1457 onwards.

Martin SCHONGAUER

Born c. 1453 (1435–40?) at Colmar, died 2 February 1491 at Breisach. Came from an Augsburg patrician family. His father was a goldsmith. 1465, studied at the university of Leipzig. 1456–59, student, journey to Burgundy via the Low Countries, and then to Spain. 1471, settled at Colmar. 1477, mentioned as a master of the Painters' Guild; bought a house. 1489, citizen of Breisach. Engraver and fresco painter (fresco of *Last Judgment* rediscovered at Breisach in 1932).

Bernard STRIGEL

Born 1460–61 at Memmingen, died there in 1528. In Memmingen from 1505 onwards. Probably a pupil of Zeitblom. Worked at Augsburg and Nuremberg. Portrait painter of Emperor Maximilian, and titular painter of the town of Memmingen.

Konrad WITZ

Probably born after 1400 at Rottweil, died between 1444 and 1446 at Geneva or Basle. Son of Hans Witz, painter at Constance and Rottweil. Probably a pupil of his father. 1434 entered Painters' Guild at Basle. 1435, became a citizen of Basle. Married a niece of the painter Nikolaus Ruesch. 1443, bought a house. 1444, visit to Geneva.

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